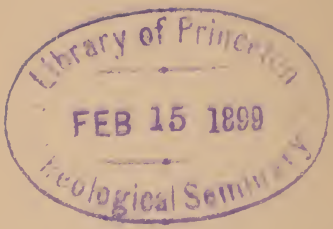

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Memoir of the Rev. Matthew
Henry, the commentator, an

MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. MATTHEW HENRY,

THE COMMENTATOR;

AN

IMMEDIATE DESCENDANT OF THE ENGLISH PURITANS.

ABRIDGED AND CONDENSED FROM THE LIFE

BY J. B. WILLIAMS, ESQ., F.S.A.

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.—Psalm 112 : 6.

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This edition of the Life of the Rev. Matthew Henry has been abridged and rewritten from the work of John B. Williams, LL. D., of Shrewsbury, England. No new matter has been introduced; nor has any sentiment been altered. But the language has been frequently changed and transposed. Much of Dr. Williams' book, of a local character, has been altogether omitted; other parts have been condensed; and portions of that which formed the appendix of the original work, have been incorporated in fitting places in this volume.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

REV. MATTHEW HENRY.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Henry's Birth—Education—Alarming Sickness—Memorial of Mercies—Self-examination, and Evidences of True Grace—Inclination to the Ministry, and habits—Removal to Mr. Doolittle's Academy—His Return to Broad Oak.

MATTHEW HENRY was the second son of the Rev. Philip Henry, and was born October 18, 1662, at Broad Oak, in the township of Iscoyd, Flintshire, North Wales. His birth was in the year of the celebrated Act of Conformity, which ejected his father, and two thousand other servants of Christ, from the Gospel ministry.

During infancy his health was delicate; and his life was threatened by a disease which had already removed his brother John to heaven. But God, who had a great work for him to do, spared the tender grape for the blessing which was in it; for he afterwards became a great blessing to his family, to the church, and to the world.

At a very early period his mind displayed the vigor and acuteness for which through life it was remarkable. It is credibly stated that, at the early age of three years, he could read the Bible with distinctness. His grammatical studies were superintended by Mr. Turner, a gentleman who resided at the time at Broad Oak. The efforts of the scholar kept pace with his privileges; and childish things being put away early, the usual temptations to sloth, negligence, and frivolity, were voluntarily and happily escaped. His tender mother was often afraid lest he should apply himself too closely to his studies, and used sometimes to call him out of his room, and advise him to take a walk in the fields, lest his health might suffer by inordinate confinement and application.

There can be no doubt that the facilities afforded at Broad Oak for the attainment of literature, were appropriate and valuable; yet those for the acquisition of the far more important knowledge of religious truth, were not less so. There were the morning and evening expositions of holy Scripture at family worship, the unceasing prayers of eminently devout parents, and the abundant instructions which were associated with a consistent and holy example.

Some extracts from a letter written by Matthew, when only nine years old, to his father, who was then in London, will illustrate this period; and whether viewed as a development of progress in

learning, or as evincing the effects of a godly education, or as being probably the first specimen of his epistolary style, the selections will be alike interesting. He says, "Every day since you went, I have done my lesson, aside of Latin, or Latin verses, and two verses in the Greek Testament. I hope I have done all well, and so I will continue till you come." In reference to tidings which had been communicated in the letter respecting one of his relatives, he adds—and the resemblance to his subsequent style of writing will not pass unnoticed by those who are acquainted with that style—"By this providence we may see that sin is the worst of evils, for sickness came with sin. Christ is the chief good; therefore, let us love him. Sin is the worst of evils; therefore, let us hate that with a perfect hatred." This was, indeed, remarkable language for a child only nine years old.

But the expectations indulged were soon afterwards checked. A lingering fever attacked the interesting youth when about ten years of age; and such was the extreme violence of the attack, as for some time to excite daily apprehension of his death. In this trial, the faith of the parents triumphed over the agitations of natural tenderness. They trusted in the Lord, and invoked his holy name. During this time, the afflicted father, acting upon the counsel which he gave to others, that weeping must not hinder sowing, fulfilled the usual duties of his min-

istry; and when hope was almost extinct, he left home to preach at a distance. Nor was his return cheered by more favorable appearances. In this period of affliction, the widow of the Rev. Zechariah Thomas was on a visit at Broad Oak, and proved a comforter in sorrow. To her, Mr. Henry remarked, that while absent, he had most solemnly and deliberately resigned his dear child to the will of God. The good old gentlewoman replied, "And I believe, sir, in that place and time, God gave him back to you again." And so it turned out. Recovery speedily followed: and Mrs. Savage, one of Matthew's sisters, who heard the conversation, remarked many years afterwards, that, though at the time she was only eight years old, and could think but as a child, she was much impressed with it; and believing that her brother's life was marvellously prolonged, he became additionally endeared to her. To detail the state of the sufferer's own mind during the progress of the disease is rendered impossible by the absence of materials. But, from subsequent events, it is not too much to infer, that the affliction contributed to produce susceptibility of impression, and resembled what the Scriptures beautifully term, "breaking up the fallow-ground."

Matthew Henry was early the subject of divine grace. His translation from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son, will appear most interesting in his own account of it. A manu-

script dated October 18, 1675, satisfactorily furnishes such an account. In the form of a "Catalogue of Mercies," it details, at some length, the progress of religion in his soul, together with the evidences upon which he formed a belief of its genuineness. He commences with praise for such mercies as were "spiritual;" "for the Lord Jesus Christ, his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession; for grace, pardon, peace; for the word, the means of grace; for prayer; for good instructions; for good received at any time under the word; for any succor and help from God under temptation; for brokenness of heart; for any enlightening." He adds, "I think it was three years ago that I began to be convinced, hearing a sermon by my father on Psalm 51 : 17, 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.' I think it was *that* that melted me; afterwards I began to inquire after Christ.

"December 7, 1673. On a Sabbath morning, I heard a sermon that had in it the marks of true grace. I tried myself by them, and told my father my evidences. He liked them, and said, if those evidences were true, as I think they were, I had true grace. Yet after this, for two or three days, I was under great fear of hell, till the Lord comforted me. I having been engaged in serious examination, what hope I have that when I die, and leave this

earthly tabernacle, I shall be received into heaven, I have found several marks that I *am* a child of God. His ministers say,

"1. There is true conversion where there have been covenant transactions between God and the soul. And I found that there have been such between God and my soul, and I hope in truth and righteousness. If I never did this before, I do it now; for I take God in Christ to be mine. I give up myself to be his in the bond of an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten. But hath it been in truth? As far as I know my own heart, I do it in truth and sincerity. I did it December 7, and September 5, and October 13, and many other times. I do it every day.

"2. Where there hath been true repentance for sin; and grief, and shame, and sorrow for it, as to what is past; with all the ingredients of it, as confession, aggravation, self-judging, self-condemning, etc. And I have found this in me, though not in such measure as I could desire. I have been heartily sorry for what is past. I judge myself before the Lord, blushing for shame that I should ever affront him as I have done; and ministers have assured me, that having repented of sin, and believed on Christ, I am to believe that I am pardoned. Now I *have* done this, and I do really believe I am forgiven for Christ's sake. This is grounded on several Scriptures: Proverbs 28:13;

Isaiah 1 : 18 ; 55 : 7 ; Matthew 5 : 4 ; Acts 2 : 37, 38 ; 3 : 19 ; 1 John, 1 : 9. And many other Scriptures there are where God doth expressly call people to return and repent. But hath this sorrow been *true?* As far as I know my own heart, it hath been true. But I sin often. I lament and bewail it before the Lord, and I endeavor, by the grace of God, to do so no more.

"3. Where there is true love of God. For to love the Lord our God with all our soul, and with all our strength, is better than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. Now, as far as I know my own heart, I love God in sincerity. But is that love indeed sincere? As far as I can judge, it is so; for,

"(1.) I love the people of God; all the Lord's people shall be my people.

"(2.) I love the word of God. I esteem it above all. I find my heart so inclined. I desire it as the food of my soul. I greatly delight in it, both in reading and hearing it; and my soul can witness subjection to it in some measure. I think I love the word of God for the purity of it. I love the ministers and messengers of the word. I am often reading it. I rejoice in the good success of it. All which were given as marks of true love to the word, in a sermon I lately heard on Psalm 119 : 140. 'Thy word is very pure; therefore thy servant loveth it.'"

From this interesting document it is manifest, that before he had attained his eleventh year, he was led into that vital and essential part of true wisdom, which consists in knowledge of himself and the state of his own soul. In after-life he used to remark, "There begins to be some hope of people when they are concerned about their souls; about spiritual provision, spiritual health, spiritual trading and husbandry; about sowing to the Spirit."

Young Henry attended with uncommon diligence upon his father's ministry; and he was often so moved by it, as to hasten to his closet when the exercise was over, to weep, and make supplication that the things which he had heard might not escape him. Sometimes his fears lest good impressions should be effaced, rose so high, as to render it difficult to prevail upon him to appear at dinner. On one occasion, especially, after a sermon illustrating the nature and growth of true grace, as compared in Scripture to a grain of mustard-seed, which, though insignificant in appearance, would in time produce great things, his concern to possess a principle so efficient and precious, was intense. And, in a walk with his father, being unable any longer to restrain them, he communicated his anxieties. Of the conversation which ensued, nothing remains: but the "young disciple" afterwards told one of his sisters, with delightful exultation, that he hoped he had received the blessed grain of true grace;

and though at present it was very small, yet that it would come to something in time.

Could such a man as Philip Henry have any greater joy than to hear his son, his only son, thus early inquiring the way to Zion? And how unspeakable was the privilege of the son, to possess in his father a scribe so well instructed in the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven; so signally "apt to teach;"-and so ready, at all times, to encourage the timid, but sincere inquirer, in the ways of God! It is to be lamented that diffidence or shame so often hinders young converts from communicating the exercises of their minds to Christians and ministers. By such backwardness they expose themselves to a variety of temptations and sorrows which they would otherwise escape, as well as unnecessarily deprive those who are filled with zeal for the Lord of hosts, of exquisite pleasure derived from the knowledge of their conversion. There is joy both in heaven and earth over one sinner that repenteth.

Philip Henry, like most of the puritans and nonconformists, was distinguished for a reverential observance of the Lord's day. That holy habit had been formed by him in early life; it was strengthened by subsequent convictions; and experience imparted to it confirmation and maturity. On recovering from an illness, he once remarked, "It is comfortable to reflect upon an affliction borne pa-

tiently; an enemy forgiven heartily; and a Sabbath sanctified uprightly."

That his children might be impressed the more deeply with like sentiments, and especially in order to the better sanctification of the day of holy rest, they were expected to spend an hour together, every Saturday afternoon, in devotional exercises. On these occasions, Matthew presided, and gave intimations of his subsequent delight in God's service too distinct and impressive to be either overlooked or forgotten. On such occasions, if he thought his sisters improperly curtailed their prayers, he would gently expostulate with them; telling them that "it was impossible, in so short a time, to include all the cases and persons they had to recommend to God." And his admonitions were kindly received. In riper years, those holy women acknowledged, to the divine glory, how much they were influenced and encouraged by their brother's example and remarks.

From his childhood, Matthew Henry had an inclination to the work of the ministry. This he discovered by the remarkable eagerness with which he read the Bible; by a peculiar attachment to ministers; and by the manifest pleasure which he took in writing and repeating sermons. He loved also to imitate preaching; which, considering his years, he managed with great propriety, gravity, and judgment.

When very young he coveted the society of those who "feared the Lord, and thought upon his name." He frequently met them, in their assemblies for conference and prayer, praying with them, and repeating sermons. Occasionally, also, he explained the chapters read, enlarging upon them very much to the benefit and comfort of the auditors. By these efforts, surprise was naturally excited; and one person expressed fear lest he should be too forward, and fall a victim to pride. This apprehension was expressed to his judicious father. "Let him go on," was the answer; "he fears God, and designs well, and I hope God will keep him and bless him."

The privileges enjoyed at Broad Oak were peculiarly fitted to prepare young Henry for the sacred office. His father, in addition to being an admired preacher, had amassed rich treasures of polite and useful learning: from this store he was always willing to communicate; and so felicitous was he in the work of instruction, as to be seldom equalled, and perhaps never surpassed. Having himself derived much advantage from being a student of Christ Church College, Oxford, he was led, during many years, to entertain a kindness for the universities, and to recommend his friends who intended their sons for scholars, to send them thither. But long experience altered his mind, and when he determined, on account of his own pressing engagements, to send his son from home, in order to avoid the

numerous temptations presented to young men in the national seats of learning, he placed him in the family, and under the tuition of the Rev. Thomas Doolittle, a faithful minister of the Gospel, who then lived at Islington, one of the suburbs of London.

Young Mr. Henry's removal to Islington took place in the year 1680. These were times of trial for the pious non-conformists. Persecution soon drove Mr. Doolittle from Islington. He removed to Battersea, and his pupils were scattered among private families at Clapham. But Mr. Henry, instead of accompanying them, returned, it is believed, to Broad Oak. But whether he returned immediately to his father's or not, it is certain that when his studies were resumed at home, they were pursued, as at Islington, with unwearied diligence. At Broad Oak, that house of God and prayer, to which so many good people often used to resort, such exemplary piety as that which young Mr. Henry displayed, attracted notice; and he, like the son of Elkanah, "was in favor both with the Lord, and also with men." Mr. Tong, his friend and earliest biographer, remarks, that "those who knew him, coveted his company, and were delighted with it."

CHAPTER II.

Study of the law at Gray's Inn—Habits—Correspondence—Trial of the Rev. Richard Baxter—Visit to Mr. Baxter in prison—Correspondence.

After Matthew Henry left Islington, he became a frequent and welcome visitor at Boreatton, in Shropshire, the seat of Rowland Hunt, Esq., one of his father's most particular and endeared friends. Mr. Hunt was no stranger, therefore, either to his attainments, or to his designs in reference to the ministry. That gentleman, however, advised his return to London, that the study of the law might be added to his other accomplishments; a practice which in the sixteenth century had much prevailed both in England and on the continent of Europe. This friend's advice was approved both by the father and the son; and towards the end of April, 1685, Mr. Henry, then in his twenty-third year, journeyed a second time to London; and in Holborn Court, Gray's Inn, commenced a new course of studies, and one apparently opposite to those in which he had been previously engaged.

In these new circumstances he became acquainted with several gentlemen, members of the same inn, who were exemplary for industry, religion, and virtue. The names of Mr. Turner of Canterbury, Mr. Edward Harley, Mr. Dunch, Mr. Birch, and Mr. Edward and Mr. Gilbert Horsman, were often men-

tioned by him with respect and honor. Many years afterwards, when he had an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with his old friend, Mr. Sergeant Birch, his diary does not fail to express the gratification which he experienced in his society.

In the "house of the lawe" Mr. Henry's diligence was constant and exemplary; and had he addicted himself exclusively to this study, he would probably have risen to distinction as a lawyer. Although not fully enamored of the science of law, his application to it was such as to rouse the fears of several friends and relatives, lest the result should be unfavorable to his early resolutions. The alarm, however, was needless: he remained true to his original purpose; and the "office of a bishop" was still earnestly desired, and steadily kept in view; though, occasionally, the discouragements of the times, in consequence of persecution, made him a little doubtful. But the better to effect his ruling design, he judiciously varied his pursuits; consecrating a portion of time to theological reading; promoting, among his particular friends, social prayer and religious conference, and occasionally expounding to them the Scriptures. If he did not *say* to his friends, as Cardinal Ximenes did, that he would willingly exchange all legal learning for the explanation of a single passage of holy writ, he *acted* as though this were his judgment.

While resident at Gray's Inn, an affectionate and frequent correspondence was maintained with his

father, and occasionally with his sisters. The whole series presents a collection of facts alike curious and interesting. Before any further allusion, however, is made to that collection, the reader may advantageously peruse one entire letter, addressed to Mr. Henry, soon after he left home, by his father. It exhibits a beautiful specimen of wise and apostolic counsel.

"May 30, 1685.

"Son Matthew—We are glad to hear of your health and cheerfulness; which God in mercy continue! If you take meals at a public-house daily, you must double your watch, lest it put you upon inconvenience. My caution not to overstudy yourself was occasioned by what you wrote, that you had read Littleton so often over, and had begun Coke upon him, which I thought could not well be, especially during the first month, which affords most diversions, without overtasking yourself: my meaning was, that you should apportion your time wisely, according to present circumstances; part to reading, the morning especially, and part to acquaint yourself with persons, and places, and affairs, which you have hitherto much wanted opportunity to acquaint yourself with; having some ground of hope that you will improve by it, letting go the chaff and refuse, and retaining that which may do you good hereafter; for this present time you are to look upon as your gathering time, and to be as busy as the

ant in summer, the factor in the fair or market, the industrious merchant when in the Indies. You proposed to lay hold on opportunities for hearing sermons; not Latin ones *only*. I hope you perform, and also reflect after, and pen the heads at home, which both engages present attention and lays up for time to come. It is the talk and wonder of many of our friends what we mean by this sudden change of your course and way; but I hope, through God's goodness and mercy, they will shortly see it was for good.

"With yours I received one from dear Mr. Steel, who would be glad to see you often, as I know my worthy friend Mr. Lawrence would also; but their circumstances prevent their coming to you; therefore you must go to them, not to be burdensome, but like a bee to the flowers, to gather from them.

"Just now, this morning, your sisters Katharine and Ann are gone towards Salop, to be there awhile. It is a change with us to want three of you at once; but hoping it will be for your improvement and theirs, we are well satisfied in the will of God ordering it so. Ere long there will be greater partings: how soon we know not; but if we may be with you together for ever, and with the Lord, that will be happiness indeed.

"Be careful, my dear child, in the main matter. Keep yourself always in the love of God; let nothing come, however not abide, between you and his

favor, for in that is *life*. Rejoice in the great auction, and make the pearl of price sure, and the field too in which it is. Farewell. Much love is to you from all here, and particularly from

"Your loving father,

"P. H."

The following beautiful improvement of one of the most ordinary occurrences of life, is characteristic of the nature of Mr. Henry's mind, which seemed, as it were, ever ready to turn every thing to some spiritual advantage. Even now, when the facilities of the post-office are so much increased, both in expedition and certainty, compared with what they were in his day, the subject is seldom so well improved. In a letter dated July 5, 1685, he says,

"It pleaseth me sometimes to think what a ready, speedy way of intercourse there is between me and home, though at such a distance; that a letter can come from your hands to mine, through the hands of so many who are strangers to us both, in the space of sixty hours. But as ready as this way is, blessed be God, we have a readier way to send to heaven at all hours; and can convey our letters thither, and receive gracious answers thence, in less time than so. That the throne of grace is always open, to which we have (how sweet a word it is) 'liberty of speech,' when we are with him, and more than so, even 'access with confidence.' Eph.

3 : 12. We are introduced by the Spirit, as ambassadors conducted to the prince by the master of the ceremonies. Esther had access to Ahasuerus, but not access with confidence, far from it, when she said, I will go in, and 'if I perish, I perish.' But we have access with confidence, through the 'new and living Way' laid open for us to the Father by the blood of his Son, who ever lives to make intercession, in the virtue and value of his satisfaction. And if this be not a sufficient ground for that confidence, what is?"

It was in the month of May this year (1685) that the infamous trial of Mr. Baxter was acted before the scurrilous Judge Jeffreys, at Guildhall; and in daring violation of law and reason, the venerable non-conformist was sentenced by that "unjust judge" to pay five hundred marks, to lie in prison till they were paid, and to be bound to his good behavior for seven years. Whether Mr. Henry witnessed the public obloquy of his father's ancient and beloved friend, does not appear; but the following letter details a visit to the imprisoned saint. It is one of those pictures of days that are past, which, if rightly viewed, may produce lasting and beneficial effects: emotions of sacred sorrow for the iniquity of persecution, and animating praise that the demon in these happy days of tranquillity is restrained, though not destroyed. Holiness, how much soever it may annoy, or even irritate, by its splendor, has,

through the favor of the Most High, the fullest liberty to shine.

"17th November, 1685.

"HONORED SIR—On Saturday last I was with good Mr. Lawrence, who sends affectionate respects to you. He, and some others of them, walk the streets with freedom.

"I went into Southwark to Mr. Baxter. I was to wait upon him once before, and then he was busy. I found him in pretty comfortable circumstances, though a prisoner, in a private house near the prison, attended on by his own man and maid. My good friend Mr. Samuel Lawrence went with me. He is in as good health as any one can expect; and, methinks, looks better, and speaks heartier, than when I saw him last. The token you sent he would by no means be persuaded to accept, and was almost angry when I pressed it, from one outed* as well as himself. He said he did not use to receive; and I understand since, his need is not great.

"We sat with him about an hour. I was very glad to find that he so much approved of my present circumstances. He said he knew not why young men might not improve by such a course, as well as by travelling abroad. He inquired for his Shropshire friends, and observed, that of those gentlemen who were with him at Wem, he hears of none whose

* Ejected by the Act of Uniformity.

sons tread in their father's steps but Colonel Hunt's. He inquired about Mr. Macworth's, and Mr. Lloyd of Aston's children. He gave us some good counsel to prepare for trials, and said the best preparation for them was a life of faith, and a constant course of self-denial. He thought it harder constantly to deny temptations to sensual lusts and pleasures, than to resist one single temptation to deny Christ for fear of suffering; the former requiring such constant watchfulness: however, after the former, the latter will be the easier. He said we who are young are apt to count upon *great* things, but we must not look for it; and much more to this purpose. He said he thought dying by sickness usually much more painful and dreadful than dying a violent death; especially, considering the extraordinary supports which those have who suffer for righteousness' sake. He sends you his respects. Good Mr. Tallents also I saw that night, and sat with him awhile. Your most dutiful son,

"Matt. Henry."

The following note to him from his excellent mother, containing holy counsel, and exhibiting parental anxiety, admirably evinces that enviable union of tenderness and wisdom for which she was distinguished.

"Dear Child—It is much my comfort and rejoicing to hear so often from you; and, although I

have little to send you but love and my blessing, your father being absent, I write a line or two to you to mind you to keep in with God, as I hope you do, by solemn, secret, daily prayer; watching therein with perseverance; not forgetting what you have been taught, and the covenant engagements, renewed again and again, that you lie under, to walk circumspectly in your whole conversation; watching against youthful lusts, evil company, sins, and snares from the world and the devil.

"Your affectionate mother,

"KATHARINE H."

Of the excellent spirit which was found in Mr. Henry even at this early age, the following extract from a letter to his father is a pleasing demonstration. Referring to his father's letters to him, he says,

"None hath been a messenger of evil tidings, for which let the name of God have all the glory; and let us still be *prepared* for evil tidings, not knowing what a day may bring forth. If we can make sure uninterrupted peace and tranquillity in the other world, we have no great reason to complain of the interruptions of this world. It is the lower region of the air that is liable to variety of weathers, while the upper region enjoys a constant calm. And are we moving thitherwards? And do we hope to be there shortly, where all tears are wiped away from the eyes, and all sorrow eternally banished from the heart? And shall we perplex ourselves about the

little, little trifles of this vain, empty world, the things whereof are vanity in the having, and vexation of spirit in the losing, nor ever will, or can, afford that content and satisfaction which men expect and count upon, in the enjoyment of them; and which too few seek where it is to be had."

All his letters from Gray's Inn discover to great advantage his filial attentions; they convey a pleasant impression of his observation and prudence; they demonstrate his zeal for the acquisition of useful knowledge; and they exhibit, in the most unexceptionable manner, his mental acuteness, his personal piety, and the consecration of every successive acquirement to the Redeemer's honor. They were worthy of Philip Henry's son, and must have oftentimes proved an occasion of rejoicing and praise before the throne of God. It is easy, in imagination, to behold the venerable parents perusing, week after week, those epistles of grace, and mingling, with overflowing tenderness, their mutual gratulations, that their beloved child, though at so great a distance from them, was walking in the truth.

It would be anticipating a future division of the present work, to delineate, in this early stage of it, Mr. Henry's character and conduct as a friend. Yet the order which has been adopted seems here to require the introduction of a letter addressed by him to one whom he regarded in that sacred character. This individual was Mr. George Illidge of

Nantwich, whose heart the Lord having opened when very young, and who, enjoying few religious advantages at home, attended the ministry at Broad Oak. His seriousness and zeal secured him a welcome, and his excellent conduct commanded unfeigned respect. It is not known *when* the acquaintance between the two youths commenced, but it was turned to a good account; and became the means of eliciting dispositions the most strictly virtuous and useful. The grave and mature counsels contained in the letter, are far beyond the years of the writer of them.

"GRAY'S INN, March 1, 1686.

"DEAR FRIEND—I think I remember, when I last saw you I partly promised to write to you, which I doubt I should either have forgotten, or have deferred the performance of, had I not been lately reminded of it in a letter from one of my sisters. And now I have put my pen to paper to perform my promise, what shall I write? News we have little, or none considerable; and you know I was never a good newsmonger; and to fill a letter with idle, impertinent compliments, is very useless, and will pass but ill in the accounts another day; for sure, if idle words must be accounted for, idle letters will not be left out of the reckoning. What if I should, therefore, having no other business at present, give you a few serious lines, which may, perhaps, be of some spiritual advantage to your

soul. I have been lately thinking of some great Scripture truths, or principles, the firm, practical belief of which would be of great use to a Christian, and have a mighty influence upon the right ordering of his conversation; and they are some such as these:

"1. That 'all things are naked and open unto him with whom we have to do.' Heb. 4: 13. A firm belief of God's all-seeing eye always upon us, wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, would be a mighty awe-band upon the spirit, to keep it serious and watchful. Dare I omit such a known duty, or commit such a known sin, while I am under the eye of a just and holy God, who hates sin, and cannot endure to look on iniquity? It was a significant name which Hagar gave to the well where God appeared unto her, Gen. 16: 14, 'Beer-lahai-roi,' the well of him that lives and sees me; for she said, v. 13, 'Thou God seest me.' This would be a very seasonable thought, when we are entering either into duty, or into temptation, to lift up our heart in these words, 'Thou God seest me;' and therefore, let duty be carefully done, and sin carefully avoided, considering that he who sees all now, will tell all shortly before angels and men, in the day 'when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest.' Luke 12: 2.

"2. That our adversary the devil, 'as a roaring lion, goes about continually, seeking whom he may

devour.' 1 Peter, 5 : 8. We do not see him, and therefore we are apt to be secure; but certainly it is so, and therefore we should never be off our watch. What folly is it for us to be slumbering and sleeping, while such a cruel, crafty enemy is waking and watching, and ready to do us a mischief! You know, when Saul slept, he lost his spear and his cruise of water. Many a Christian has lost his strength and comfort by sleeping.

"3. That 'the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily.' Titus 2 : 11, 12. That the Gospel, as it is a Gospel of grace, requires a holy conversation. Christ died to save his people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. The Gospel hath its commands, as well as its promises and privileges, and therefore there is such a thing as a gospel-becoming conversation, Phil. 1 : 27, living up to gospel love as well as gospel light.

"4. That 'Jesus Christ died to deliver us from this present evil world.' Gal. 1 : 4. We are apt to think Christ died to deliver us only from hell, and if that be done we are well enough. No; Christ died to deliver us from this world. So, if our hearts are glued to present things, and our affections fixed upon them, we do directly thwart the great design of our Lord Jesus Christ in coming to save us.

"5. That 'we are not under the law, but under grace.' Romans 6 : 14. This is a mighty encour-

agement to us to abound in all manner of gospel obedience, to consider that we are not under the law that required personal, perfect obedience, and pronounced a curse for the least failure, but under the covenant of grace, which accepts the willing mind, and makes sincerity our perfection. What a sweet word is grace! What a savor doth it leave upon the lips! And to be under grace, under the sweet and easy rule of grace, how comfortable is it!

"6. That the soul is the man, and that condition of life is best for us that is best for our souls. It fares with the man as it fares with his soul. He is the truly healthful man whose *soul* prospers and is in health. He is the truly rich man, not who is rich in houses, land, and money, but who is rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom. Those are our best friends that are friends to our souls, and those are our worst enemies that are enemies to our souls; for the soul is the man, and if the soul be lost, all is lost.

"7. That 'we have here no continuing city.' Heb. 13 : 14. That we are in this world as in an inn, and must be gone shortly. Why should we, then, conform ourselves to this world, or cumber ourselves with it? Should we not, then, sit loose to it, as we do to an inn? And what if we have but ill accommodation; it is but an inn, it will be better at home. If our lodging here *be* hard and cold, it is no great matter; our lodging in our Father's house will be soft and warm enough.

"8. That 'every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity.' Psalm 39 : 5. We ourselves are so, and therefore we must not dote on any temporal enjoyments. We carry our lives, as well as our other comforts, in our hands, and know not how soon they may slip through our fingers. Every one is vanity, therefore cease from man, from fearing him, and from trusting in him.

"9. That 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.' Eccles. 12 : 14. That every man must shortly give an account to God. The serious thoughts of this would engage us to do nothing now, which will not pass well in our accounts then.

"10. That 'the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Romans 6 : 23. Heaven and hell are great things, indeed, and should be much upon our hearts, and improved by us as a spur of constraint to put us upon duty, and a bridle of restraint to keep us from sin. We should labor to see reality and weight in invisible things, and live as those that must be somewhere for ever; to see hell the wages and due desert of sin, and heaven the free gift of God through Jesus Christ.

"Many other such truths might be mentioned, which those who are acquainted with the Scriptures, and with their own hearts, need not be directed to. It would be of use to a Christian, to take some one

such truth into his mind in the morning, and upon occasion in the day, to be thinking frequently of it, and to say, 'This is the truth of the day; this is to be an answer to this day's temptations; this is to be a spur to this day's duties; and this is to be the subject of this day's meditation, and of this day's discourse, as we have opportunity.' I am apt to think such a course would be very beneficial. Hereby a good stock of truths might be treasured up against a time of need, and we might be able to bring forth things new and old for the benefit of others. For certainly it is our duty, as we have ability and opportunity, to help our friends and neighbors in their spiritual necessities, to strengthen the weak, confirm the wavering, direct the doubting, and comfort the feeble-minded, to say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong.

"Discourse to this purpose, how profitable would it be, both to ourselves and others; and how much better it would pass in our account another day, than a great deal of that vain, impertinent talk, which fills up the time of too many professors when they come together. And I fear it is a fault more acknowledged than amended.

"I remember to have read, that when the famous Bishop Usher and Dr. Preston, who were intimate friends, were talking together, after much discourse of learning and other things, the bishop would say, 'Come, doctor, one word of Christ now before we

part.' Christians, who owe their all to Christ, should be often talking of him. And surely those that know the worth of souls cannot but be concerned for their ignorant, careless neighbors; which concernedness should put us upon doing all we can to help them out of that condition. And if there be any that are asking the way to Zion, with their faces thitherwards, pray tell them the way. Tell them,

"1. There is but one gate into this way, and that is the strait gate of sound conversion.

"2. Tell them that the way is narrow, that there is not elbow-room for their lusts; let them know the worst of it; and that those who would be good soldiers of Christ must endure hardness.

"3. Tell them, notwithstanding this, it is a way of pleasantness; it gives spiritual, though it prohibits sensual pleasures.

"4. Tell them there is *life eternal* at the end, and let them be assured that one hour of joy in heaven will make them amends for an age of trouble upon earth. One sheaf of that harvest will be recompense enough for a seedness of tears. Psalm 126 : 5, 6.

"I am at present somewhat indisposed, and have written confusedly, and therefore I would have you keep it to yourself. I hope you will not forget me at the throne of grace, for I have need of your prayers. Give my affectionate respects to your

wife, and mother, and sister; to Mrs. Elizabeth Wilson, who, I take for granted, is with you; to Mr. Hopkins, my aunt Burroughs, and Richard Gill, and all the rest of my very good friends, if with you, as if particularly named. I have nothing more to add, but to commend you all to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I am, your real friend,

"MATTHEW HENRY."

CHAPTER III.

His Return to Broad Oak—His Preaching—Visits Chester—Invitations to the Ministerial Office there—Self-examination before Ordination—His Ordination.

IN the month of June, 1686, Mr. Henry returned to Broad Oak. It was soon apparent that his law studies had nowise diverted him from his original design. The study of the Scriptures was as interesting to him as ever; and his desire to make known the mystery of the Gospel, instead of being weakened, had increased: it was more intense and more enlightened.

Being invited by his friend Mr. George Illidge to Nantwich, he preached there several evenings to a considerable audience, and with encouraging suc-

cess. On the last of those occasions his subject was Job 37 : 22, "With God is terrible majesty." Mr. Illidge observed a notoriously wicked man present. With a view to ascertain the effects of his attendance, he called upon him the next morning. The man and his wife were in tears. The convictions of sin, and sense of danger, in the mind of the husband, seemed to be pungent and salutary; and his apprehensions of the majesty and wrath of God were awfully vivid: the wife wept from sympathy. Mr. Illidge offered up supplications on their behalf, communicated suitable encouragement, and pressed an earnest warning against wicked company. The man taught his wife to read, practised family worship, often accompanied Mr. Illidge to Broad Oak, and was admitted to the church. In appearance, the change was universal and entire; religious joy was sometimes avowed; and, for several years, he seemed to "run well." His wife, in the judgment of charity, died in the faith of the Gospel; but he, alas, after a time, being "hindered," was guilty of very sad defection, and quitted the narrow way, it is feared, for ever. In such a connection as this, how consummate appears the wisdom of the apostolic counsel, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall!" And how necessary are self-examination, holy watching, and unceasing prayer.

It is natural to suppose, that the encouragement which attended Mr. Henry's first efforts, increased

his satisfaction in the decision which he had made for the ministry. Having been on a visit at Chester, and being invited by some friends there to preach to them, he complied; and two or three successive evenings, at the houses of friends, "he received all that came; preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence; no man forbidding him." These services tended to produce a most favorable impression upon the minds of the hearers in reference to Mr. Henry's ministerial qualifications; and the present circumstances of the nonconformists in that city occasioned earnest desires that he might become their pastor. By the death of two valuable ministers, Mr. Cook and Mr. Hall, a loss had been sustained which their survivor, Mr. Harvey, an aged divine, was unable to repair. About this time government granted more liberty and enlargement to dissenters than they had been wont to enjoy. Encouraged, therefore, by this event of Providence, after having advised with his father, he returned a favorable answer to the invitation which he received from Chester to settle there, provided Mr. Harvey would give his consent to it; so delicate were his sentiments, and so scrupulous was his conscience, in this important movement. In a personal interview with this aged divine, Mr. Henry assured him that if he did not consent to his settlement in the city, he would return, and de-

sired him to express himself freely. Mr. Harvey at once satisfied him of his good-will, and pleasantly added, "There is work enough for us both." This incident reads valuable lessons to both young and aged ministers.

The business of ordination was next attended to with exemplary deliberation and seriousness. Not only did he avail himself of the counsel of his friends, particularly the Rev. Messrs. F. Tallents and James Owen, but for more permanent advantage, he sketched a discourse on 1 Timothy, 4 : 15, "Give thyself wholly to them," in which he stated the nature and several parts of the ministerial work, and what it is for a man to give himself wholly to them—to be wholly *in* them, as the original Greek signifies. He likewise composed a paper which he designated "Serious Self-examination before Ordination." This paper is so general in its nature, and presents so complete and unusual a combination of vigilance and wisdom, as to justify its insertion in these pages, notwithstanding its length. It is as follows:

"That it is very requisite for a man to examine himself seriously at such a time, will readily be granted by those who consider the nature of the ordinance, and of that work into which it is a solemn entrance.

"'Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any

wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.'

"It is worth while for a man at such a time deliberately to ask himself, and having asked, conscientiously to answer, the six following questions:

"Q. I. *What am I?*

"This is a needful question, because, in ordination I give up myself to God in a peculiar manner; and will God accept the torn, and the blind, and the lame? Surely, no. The sacrifice must be searched before it was offered, that it might be sure to fit its end. Now, though the truth of grace be not perhaps necessary to the *esse* of a minister," (to being a minister,) "for Judas himself was an apostle, yet it is necessary to the *bene esse*," (to being a good minister.) "A man cannot be a good minister without it. And therefore come, my soul, let us inquire what am I? And let the inquiry be strict and serious, for a mistake here is fatal.

"1. Have I ever been inwardly convinced of the lost and undone condition in which I was born; that I was by nature a child of wrath, even as others? Did I ever see myself wallowing in my blood, in a forlorn, outcast, helpless state, lost and ruined for ever without Christ?

"2. Was I ever deeply humbled before the Lord for the original sin that I was born in, and the numberless actual transgressions in heart and life that I have been guilty of? Hath sin been bitter to my

soul, hath my heart been broken for it, and hath my sorrow been of the right kind? Hath the sight of a broken Saviour broken my heart?

"3. Have I sincerely closed with the Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith, taken him to be mine, and resigned up myself to him to be his? Have I accepted of Christ upon gospel terms, to be my Prince to rule, and Saviour to save me? Have I renounced all others, and resolved to cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, let what will come? Is Christ precious to me; is he dearer to me than any thing in the world besides? Could I be freely willing to part with all for Christ, and count every thing but loss that I may win Christ?

"4. Have I a real hatred of every sin, in myself as well as in others? Have I no beloved lust which I would spare, no darling corruption which I would have to remain unmortified? Does sin *appear* sin in my eyes; and can I say with David that 'I hate every false way?' Are the remainders of indwelling corruption a burden to me? Do I long to be rid of sin? Are my resolutions sincere, and my endeavors serious, against sin, and all appearance of it, and that because it is against God?

"Have I a real love to holiness? Do I press after it, and earnestly desire to be more holy, using holy ordinances for this end, that I may be made thereby more and more holy? Am I fond of holy ordinances and holy people, and that because they

are holy? Have I a real value for holiness wherever I see it? Do I delight in God's holy word, and that because it is holy? Do I call the holy Sabbath a delight, and that because it is holy? Do I love the brethren because they are holy, and love them the better the more holy they are? Do I long to be made perfect in holiness in that other world?

"To these weighty questions, my poor soul—though compassed about with manifold weaknesses, wants, and corruptions—doth, as in the presence of God, the searcher of hearts, give a comfortable answer; and if these be the signs and characters of true grace, I trust my heart doth not deceive me, when it tells me I have some sparks of it, though swimming in a sea of corruption. But 'who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet, as if this had been but a small thing, thou hast spoken concerning thy servant for a great while yet to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God?'

"Q. II. *What have I done?*

"This is also a needful question, that, searching and examining what hath been amiss, I may repent of it, and make even reckonings in the blood of Christ, that I may not come loaded with old guilt to put on a new character, especially such a character as this. Aaron and his sons must offer a sin-offering to make atonement before they were consecrated. Leviticus 8 : 34. For he that comes near

to God under the guilt of sin unrepented of, comes at his peril, and the nearer the more dangerous.

"And therefore, O my soul, what have I done? My soul cannot but answer, I have sinned, I have perverted that which is right, and it hath not profited me. And in a serious reflection I cannot but observe,

"1. What a great deal of precious time I have trifled away and misspent in folly and vanity, and things that do not profit. Time is a precious talent which my Master hath intrusted me with, and yet how long hath it been buried, and how much hath it run to waste!

"2. How many precious opportunities, which are the cream of time, have I lost, and not improved through my own carelessness; golden seasons of grace which I have enjoyed, but have let them slip, and been little bettered by them; Sabbaths, sermons, sacraments that have come and gone, and left me as they found me. My fruit hath not been answerable to the soil I have been planted in. How often have I been ignorant under enlightening means; hard and cold under softening and warming ordinances; trifling and careless when I have been dealing with God about the concerns of my soul and eternity.

"3. How often have I broken my covenants with God, my engagements, promises, and resolutions of new and better obedience; resolved against this and

that sin, and yet fallen into it again; many a time returning to folly, after God hath spoken peace to me, and after I have spoken promises to God. Presently after a sacrament, how have I returned to former vanity, folly, sensuality, frothiness; to former pride, passion, and worldliness: so soon have I forgot the vows of God!

"4. How unprofitable have I been in my converse with others; how few have been the better for me; how many the worse for me; how little good have I done; how little light have I cast in the sphere wherein God hath placed me; how little have I been concerned for the souls of others; and how little useful have I been to them! How vain and light have I been many times in my words and carriage, going down the stream of folly with others, when my seriousness might have stemmed the tide! How seldom hath my speech been with grace, and how often with corruption; *not* seasoned with salt!

"5. In the general, how forgetful have I been of God and his word, and myself and my duty, and of the great concerns of my soul and eternity; living too much as if I had no God to serve, and no soul to save!

"I might mention many particular miscarriages which I have been guilty of in heart and life, and which are known to God and my own heart; and yet, after all, 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me, O God, from secret sins; have

mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; and according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out all my transgressions, for the sake of the Lord my righteousness.'

"Q. III. *From what principles do I act* in this undertaking?

"This is also a very material inquiry in every action, to ask whence it comes, especially in so great a turn of life as this.

"1. I hope I can say that it is of faith; and I am concerned it should be so, for 'whatsoever is not of faith is sin.' It is good for every man that he be fully persuaded in his own mind. Now,

"(1.) I am fully persuaded that Jesus Christ, as King of the church, hath appointed and established the office of the ministry, to continue in a constant succession to the end of time, for the edification of the church, and has promised to be with his ministers always, to the end of the world. So that the office of the ministry is no human invention, but a divine institution.

"(2.) I am fully persuaded that no man ought to thrust himself upon the work of the ministry, without a clear call from God to it. Not that we are to expect such extraordinary calls as the apostles had, but the ordinary call, by the mediation of ministers, who, as such, are authorized by Christ to try the abilities of those who offer themselves to the ministry; and if they find them fit, then to set them

apart to that work, in a solemn manner, by the imposition of hands, with fasting and prayer; and that 'the laying on of the hands of the presbytery' is the regular way of ordination, and most agreeable to Scripture.

"(3.) I bless God that I am pretty well satisfied with the clearness of my call to the work, though I cannot but be sensible of great weakness and insufficiency for these things; yet I find that what abilities God has been pleased to give me, (and let him have all the glory,) do evidently look towards this work; so that if I be in any measure qualified for any service, it is for this. I find also my own inclination strongly bent towards it, and that I have been much excited and encouraged to it by divers, both ministers and others, able, skilful, and faithful, fit to judge, by whom my purposes have been much confirmed. All which goes a great way towards the clearing of my call; and the earnest invitation I have lately had to stated work in a particular place, doth much help to clear my call to the work in general.

"2. I hope I can say, I act herein from a principle of true zeal for the glory of God; that this great thing I do, as I should do every thing, to the glory of God, that my light may shine, that Christ's kingdom may be advanced, the power of godliness kept up, the word of life held forth; by all which God is glorified. The desire of my soul is, that

'whether I live I may live to the Lord, or whether I die I may die to the Lord, and that living and dying I may be the Lord's.'

"3. I hope I can say, that I act herein from a principle of real love to precious souls, for the good of which I would gladly spend and be spent. Methinks I love the precious souls of men so well, that I would fain be an instrument of convincing the unconvinced, converting the unconverted, and building up saints in holiness and comfort. I hope I know so much of the worth of souls, that I should think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, than to gain mountains of silver and gold to myself.

"Q. IV. *What are the ends that I aim at* in this great undertaking?

"It is a common saying, that the end specifies the action; and therefore it is of great consequence to fix that right, that the eye may be single, for otherwise it is an evil eye. A by and base end will certainly spoil the acceptableness of the best actions that can be performed.

"Now, what is the mark I aim at in this great turn of my life? Let conscience be faithful herein, and let the Searcher of hearts make me known to myself.

"1. I think I can say with confidence, that I do not design to take up the ministry as a trade to live by, or to enrich myself by, out of the greediness of

filthy lucre. No; I hope I aim at nothing but *souls;* and if I gain those, though I should lose all my worldly comforts by it, I shall reckon myself to have made a good bargain.

"2. I think I can say with as much assurance, that my design is not to get myself a name amongst men, or to be talked of in the world, as one that makes somewhat of a figure. No; that is a poor business. If I have but a good name with God, I think I have enough, though among men I be reviled, and have my name trampled upon as mire in the streets. I prefer the good word of my Master far before the good word of my fellow-servants.

"3. I can appeal to God, that I have no design in the least to maintain a party or to keep up any schismatical faction; my heart rises against the thoughts of it. I hate dividing principles and practices, and whatever others are, I am for peace and healing; and if my blood would be sufficient balsam, I would gladly part with the last drop of it, for the closing up of the bleeding wounds of differences that are amongst true Christians. Peace is such a precious jewel, that I would give any thing for it but truth. Those who are hot and bitter in their contendings for or against little things, and zealous in keeping up names of division and maintaining parties, are of a spirit which I understand not. Let not my soul come into their secret.

"My ends, then, are according to my principles, and I humbly appeal to God concerning the integrity of my heart in them,

"(1.) That I deliberately place the glory of God as my highest and ultimate end, and if I can be but any way instrumental to promote *that*, I shall gain my end and have my desire. I do not design to preach myself, but, as a faithful friend of the bridegroom, to preach Christ Jesus my Lord, as the standard-bearer among ten thousands. And if I can but bring people to know, and love, and honor Christ, I have what I design.

"(2.) That in order to the glory of God, I do sincerely aim at the good of precious souls. God is glorified when souls are benefited, and gladly would I be instrumental in that blessed work. I would not be a barren tree in a vineyard, cumbering the ground; but by God's help I would do some good in the world, and I know no greater good I can be capable of than doing good to souls. I desire to be an instrument in God's hand of softening hard hearts, quickening dead hearts, humbling proud hearts, comforting sorrowful hearts; and if I may be enabled to do *this*, I have what I would have. If God denies me this, and suffers me to labor in vain, though I should get hundreds a year by my labor, it would be the constant grief and trouble of my soul; and if I do not gain souls, I shall enjoy all my other gains with very little satisfaction. Though even in

that case it would be some comfort, that the reward is not according to the success, but according to the faithfulness. But I seriously profess it, if I could foresee that my ministry would be wholly unprofitable, and that I should be no instrument of good to souls, though in other respects I might get enough by it, I would rather beg my bread from door to door, than undertake this great work.

"Q. V. *What do I want?*

"And what special things am I now to desire of God, the God of all grace? When I know whither to go for supplies, I am concerned to inquire what my necessities are. The requests I have to put to God are such as these:

"1. That he would fix, and confirm, and establish my heart in my dedication of myself to the work of the ministry. My carnal heart is sometimes ready to suggest to me, that I had better take some other way of living that would be less toilsome and perilous, and more pleasant and gainful; and the devil joins issue with my heart, and sets before me the profits and preferments I might possibly have in another way, and the trouble and reproach I am like to meet with in this way. Now, O that my God would restrain the tempter, and satisfy me in my choice, and furnish me with suitable considerations with which to answer such suggestions; and in order thereunto, give me believing views of eternity, having deliberately devoted myself to the work of the Lord,

keep it always in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart, and establish my way before him.

"2. That he would in a special manner be present with me in the ordinance of dedication, filling my heart with such an experimental sense of the excellency of Christ, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, that I may have cause to remember it, by a good token, as long as I live; that he would manifest himself to me, mark me for himself, and leave some sign behind him in my soul, that may make it evident God was there of a truth; that he would give me a comfortable earnest of the success of my ministry, by a signal owning of me in my entrance upon it.

"3. That he would fit and qualify me for this great work to which he is calling me. When Saul was anointed king, 'God gave *him* another heart'—a heart fit for kingship. I would fain have another heart, a heart fit for ministerial work, filled with ministerial gifts and graces.

"(1.) Ministerial gifts: every good gift comes from above, and therefore I look upwards for gifts of knowledge in the mysteries of religion; gifts of utterance to explain and apply myself to others, and to speak the word with boldness. I have also need of prudence and discretion to order the affairs of my ministry.

"(2.) Ministerial graces: faith, love to God and souls, zeal for God's glory and souls' good; patience to do, to suffer, and to wait; an inward sense

of the weight of the things I speak of. Two graces I do more especially beg of God:

"*Sincerity.* That I may be really as good as I seem to be; that inward impressions may always be answerable to outward expressions in all my ministrations; that my eye may be single, my heart upright, and my ends fixed; that I may not cast the least glance at any low, by, base end.

"*Humility.* That God would hide pride from me, and clothe me with humility, that I may see that I have nothing, except my sins, but what I have received; that I may never please myself with the praises of men, but hand up all the praise to God; that the least workings of pride and conceitedness may be checked in me.

"4. That God would open a door of opportunity to me, and make my way plain before me, that the call I have to my work may be clear and satisfying, and that God would bless and succeed my endeavors for the good of souls.

"Q. VI. *What are my purposes and resolutions for the future?*

"This is also a requisite inquiry, when I am to put on a new character, and one so honorable. What shall I do that I may 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called?'

"1. I purpose and resolve, by the grace of God, that I will have no more to do with the unfruitful works of darkness, seeing it will not only be my duty

as a Christian, but my office as a minister, to reprove them rather. 'Pride, passion, worldliness, wantonness, vanity, are things the man of God must flee.' 1 Tim., 6 : 11. What have I to do any more with idols? What have I to do any more with sin? By the grace of God it shall not have dominion over me. The ministerial character will add a great aggravation to every sin; and therefore, O my soul, stand in awe, and sin not.

"2. I purpose and resolve that, by the grace of God, I will abound more than ever in all manner of gospel obedience; that I will strive to be more humble, serious, and watchful, and self-denying, and live more above the world, and the things of it; that I will pray with more life, and read the Scriptures with more care, and not be slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; that I will abound in good discourse, as I have ability and opportunity, with prudence; endeavoring as much as I can to '*adorn* the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things.'

"3. In particular, I resolve in the strength, spirit, and grace of Jesus Christ my Lord, to consider well and perform my ordination vows; to hold fast the form of sound words which I have heard and received, in 'faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;' and never to let go any truth, whatever it cost me; ever owning the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice.

"That I will wholly give up myself to the work, and employ all my talents in the service of God and souls, with seriousness and sedulity: that I will not only preach, but to the utmost of my power defend, the truths of God against all opposers, and do all I can to convince or silence gainsayers.

"That I will endeavor to maintain not only truth, but peace and unity in the church of God; that I will patiently bear, and thankfully accept, the admonitions of my brethren, and esteem such smitings as an excellent oil that shall not break my head.

"That if ever God shall call me to the charge of a family, I will walk before my house in a perfect way, with an upright heart, not doubting but that then God will come unto me; my house shall be a Bethel; wherever I have a tent, God shall have an altar; and Joshua's resolution shall be mine: 'Whatever others do, I and my house will serve the Lord.'

"That if ever God calls me to the charge of a flock, I resolve, by his grace, with all possible diligence to lay out myself for the spiritual good of those over whom God shall set me; and that in conversation I will endeavor to be an example to the flock, going before them in the way to heaven; and will improve all the interest I have, and all the authority I may have, for the honor of God, the good of souls, and the edifying of the mystical body of Christ.

"Whatever opposition I may meet with in my

work, by the grace of God I will not be terrified with it, nor frightened by the winds and clouds from sowing and reaping; but, in the strength of my God, go on in the midst of discouragements: and if God shall call me to sufferings, which I promise to expect and count upon, I will, by the grace of God, suffer cheerfully and courageously for the truths and ways of Christ; 'choosing rather, with Moses, to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season;' and I will esteem not only the crown of Christ, but the reproach of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, having respect to the recompense of reward.

"This is the substance of what I promise in the strength of the Spirit in the grace of Christ; and having sworn by his strength I will perform it, that I will keep his righteous judgments, and the Lord keep it always in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart, and establish my way before him."

Under the deep and solemn impression of these scriptural views of himself, and God, and duty, and of these holy resolutions, made in the strength of divine grace, Mr. Henry applied to those leading Presbyterian divines in London to whom he was best known, for the rite of ordination; and, on the 9th of May, 1687, after due examination and the performance of the usual exercises, together with a

full confession of his faith, he was solemnly, but privately, ordained, by imposition of hands, with fasting and prayer. He was ordained privately, on account of the ecclesiastical commotions of the times. And the same reasons prevented him from receiving the usual certificate. His ordainers signed only the following brief memorial. Mr. Tong remarks, that "some of them were very aged and very cautious." The memorial was,

"We, whose names are subscribed, are well assured that Mr. Matthew Henry is an ordained minister of the Gospel.

"Sic testor,

"W. WICKENS.
"FRAN. TALLENTS.
"EDW. LAWRENCE.
"NATH. VINCENT.
"JAMES OWEN.
"RICH. STEELE.

"May 9th, 1687."

Thus sanctioned, Mr. Henry returned to the country, determined, in dependence upon divine aid, to "serve God with his spirit in the Gospel of his Son."

CHAPTER IV.

His settlement at Chester—Marriage to Miss Hardware—Death of Mrs. Henry—Marriage to Miss Warburton—Family afflictions, and reflections upon them.

On the 1st of June, 1687, Mr. Henry accompanied a deputation, who had waited upon him from Chester, to his future dwelling-place; and on the following day commenced a career of sacred usefulness in that city by preaching the usual Thursday lecture. His text was, 1 Cor. 2 : 2, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Mr. Tong was present, a witness of the joy and thankfulness of the people. "It may be truly said," he remarked, "that they received their new minister as an angel of God."

Besides much agreeable society which Mr. Henry found at Chester, his settlement was rendered still more pleasing to himself, by the marriage, not long afterwards, of three of his sisters, to Mr. Radford, Mr. Hulton, and Dr. Tylston, all excellent and pious men, who were constant attendants on his ministry.

But that which rendered Chester still more agreeable to him, was an introduction to the Hardware family at Moldsworth. The son, Mr. John Hardware, had married a daughter of Mr. Hunt of Boreatton; and he had an only sister, dwelling with her parents, of whose estimable qualities Mr. Henry,

when in London, had heard enough to excite his curiosity and attention: *his* character, also, had been favorably represented at Boreatton in her hearing, and she knew his sisters. So far, therefore, they were mutually prepossessed in each other's favor; nor had their personal acquaintance continued long before Mr. Henry disclosed anxieties, which, being known, were not ungraciously received.

Of Miss Hardware's parents, little is now known; but that little is abundantly honorable to their memory. Her father was a serious Christian, very conscientious, remarkable for temperance, and love to the duty of prayer, and an old puritan. Her mother was eminent for wisdom and grace. She walked with God, and looked well to the ways of her household.

Mr. Hardware, and Mr. John Hardware, the father and brother, readily accepted Mr. Henry's proposals; but Mrs. Hardware felt a considerable degree of hesitation. She viewed her daughter as her only one, and as the expectant of a considerable worldly portion; she contemplated her other recommendations, both personal and acquired; several gentlemen, too, of much larger estate than Mr. Henry, had made advances which had been declined; on which account she feared the reproach of negligence, or of having made a sacrifice to the interests of a party. No one could esteem Mr. Henry more highly than she did; she valued him as a minister

and a friend; but she thought it a duty to make better provision for her child. She knew that the ministry, especially of the non-conformists, was despised, and liberty very precarious. In the event of persecution, she was apprehensive lest her daughter, who had been tenderly brought up, and everywhere treated with respect and honor, might be deficient in the exercise of faith and patience; and, if she were *not* to stoop to the cross, a great addition would be made to Mr. Henry's troubles, at a time when comfort would be most needed.

All these scruples, were, however, at length happily removed; and the youthful couple were married in the month of August, 1687. The marriage brought to remembrance the fact that a like event had once been desired by Mr. Hardware in reference to Mr. Henry's mother; and the circumstance rendered the recent alliance additionally observable and interesting.

Mr. and Mrs. Hardware now removed to Chester, and Mr. and Mrs. Henry boarded with them. A favorable opportunity was thus furnished of judging how well their daughter had been bestowed; and when they thus additionally beheld Mr. Henry's pious and pleasant deportment, his excellent temper, and great diligence and prudence, they were far from repenting what had taken place. Mrs. Hardware, indeed, severely reflected upon herself, for having opposed the marriage. She was now

sensible of the advantages she and her husband enjoyed, in their declining years, from the expositions, and sermons, and prayers, of their son-in law. She admired the goodness of God in overruling her own inclinations, and choosing for her daughter and herself an inheritance in all respects so superior to what she would have selected had her own will prevailed. She expressed her conviction, that the objections which have been narrated arose from covetousness and pride, although, at the time, she herself was not aware of it. So industrious is the great enemy of souls with good people continually, and when they least suspect it.

But the union, propitious as in all respects it appeared, was destined, like every sublunary joy, to be of short duration. A short time before Mrs. Henry was permitted to know the felicity of maternal affection, she was attacked by the small-pox, which proved fatal. She died in the hope of a blessed immortality, on the 14th of February, 1689, aged twenty-five years.

Mrs. Hardware, though overwhelmed with sorrow, seemed to bear the affliction with more composure than Mr. Henry. An eye-witness told Mr. Tong, that when she saw her beloved child a corpse, she was enabled to check her grief, and almost immediately, with devout and patriarchal submission, to say, "It is the Lord. I have done; I have done. I will not repine." She even attempted the conso-

tion of others, and upbraiding herself for not having more freely consented to the nuptials, added, "God, who knew how long my child had to live, brought her into Mr. Henry's family to prepare her for heaven."

Between Mr. Tong and the bereaved husband, the interview was peculiarly affecting. As soon as tears would permit utterance, Mr. Henry's first words were, "I know nothing that could support me under such a loss as this, but the good hope that she is gone to heaven, and that, in a little time, I shall follow her thither." Mr. Lawrence preached at her funeral from Phil. 1 : 21, "To die is gain." It was no small alleviation of Mr. Henry's grief, that the life of his "first-born" was spared. A visit, also, from his excellent father, contributed much to his comfort in this time of need.

Mr. Henry continued to reside with the parents of his lamented wife; and, notwithstanding the depth of his grief, was enabled to persevere in the entire discharge of his ministerial duties. At length, through the kind interference of his mother-in-law, his loss was repaired. Mrs. Hardware not only advised a second marriage, but recommended one of her own relatives, Mary, a daughter of Robert Warburton, Esq., of Grange, in the county of Chester. The testimony borne, by this recommendation, to Mr. Henry's conjugal character, is highly honorable; and it is due to the lady who became his second

wife, to remark, that its value derives no small increase from the respectability and virtues of herself and her ancestors.

On this, as on the former occasion, the predilection for the "seed of the righteous," which Mr. Henry had been taught to cherish, was strongly marked. Miss Warburton's grandfather, Peter Warburton, Esq., was chief-justice of Chester, of honorable descent, and distinguished learning and piety; and her father, Robert Warburton, Esq., who, in consequence of the death of two elder brothers in infancy, inherited the estate, possessed also the like precious faith. Much attached to retirement, especially in his latter days, he spent the greater part of his time in reading and prayer. The Bible, and Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest, lay daily before him on his parlor table. His house was a sanctuary to the silenced ministers, and to those who adhered to them. The cause of non-conformity was fully approved by him, and he never deserted it. Miss Warburton's mother was also a very strict and serious Christian.

The marriage was solemnized July 8, 1690, at Grange. Mr. and Mrs. Philip Henry were present, rejoicing in their acquaintance with so worthy a family, and their relation to it. After the lapse of a few days, they accompanied their son and daughter to Chester; and having left them there in comfort, returned to their habitation at Broad Oak,

blessing God who had thus mercifully filled up the former breach, and restored to their son the honor and comforts of matrimony. Mr. and Mrs. Hardware, having seen Mr. Henry again settled according to their desire, retired from Chester to their own estate at Bromborough Court, in Wirral.

Ere one year had elapsed, the happiness of Mr. Henry in his second marriage was interrupted by the sickness of an infant daughter, born April 12, 1691. Three days before the child's death, he wrote, "I desire to leave her in the arms of Him who gave her to me. The will of the Lord be done. I have said, if the Lord will spare her, I will endeavor to bring her up for him. I am now sitting by her, thinking of the mischievous nature of original sin, by which death reigns over poor infants."

The following passage, penned July 19, 1692, the day on which the little one expired, needs no comment to make it intelligible. Christian parents, especially if they have been bereaved, will fully understand it; and every reader may behold, as in a glass, the resource and duty of the believer, when bowed down with sorrow. "In the morning I had the child in my arms, endeavoring solemnly to give her up to God, and to bring my heart to his will; and presently there seemed some reviving. But while I was writing this, I was suddenly called out of my study. I went for the doctor, and brought him with me; but, as soon as we came in, the sweet

babe quietly departed, between the mother's arms and mine, without any struggle, for nature was spent by its long illness; and now my house is a house of mourning."

"She was a pretty, forward child, and very apprehensive; she began to go and talk, and observe things very prettily. I had set my affection much upon her. I am afraid *too* much; God is wise, and righteous, and faithful. Even this, also, is not only consistent with, but flowing from covenant love. It is this day five years since I was first married. God has been teaching me to sing of mercy and of judgment. Lord, make me more perfect at my lesson, and show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Lord, wean me from this world by it. Blessed be God for the covenant of grace with me and mine; it is well ordered in all things, and sure. O that I could learn now to comfort others with the same comforts with which, I trust, I am comforted of God! This goes near, but, O Lord, I submit. My dear wife is much distressed. The Lord sustain her. I would endeavor to comfort her. We are now preparing for a decent interment of my poor babe. Many friends come to see us. I am much refreshed with 2 Kings, 4 : 26: 'Is it well with thee? Is it well with thy husband? Is it well with the child? And she said, It is well.' When I part with so dear a child, yet I have no reason to say otherwise but that it is well with *us*, and well with the child;

for all is well that God doeth. He performeth the thing that he appointed for me, and his appointment of this providence is in pursuance of his appointment of me to glory, to make me meet for it."

One extract more will record the funeral. "I have been this day doing a work I never did before, burying a child; a sad day's work; but my good friend Mr. Lawrence preached very seasonably and excellently, at the lecture in the afternoon, from Psalm 39 : 9 : 'I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.' My friends testified their kindness by their presence. There is now a pretty little garment laid up in the wardrobe of the grave, to be worn again at the resurrection. Blessed be God for the hope of this."

In due time it pleased the Father of mercies to heal the breach, by again making Mrs. Henry a joyful mother; but in less than three weeks this child also died, after a day's sickness. Mr. Henry received this stroke, sudden and affecting as it was, with primitive meekness and resignation. In reference to it, he wrote, "The Lord is righteous; he takes and gives, and gives and takes again. I desire to submit: but, O Lord, show me wherefore thou contendest with me."

On the following Sabbath, he endeavored publicly to improve the bereavement. In the morning he expounded the 38th chapter of Job, where God so largely asserts his sovereignty, and challenges all

who presume to arraign the wisdom and equity of his proceedings. "Was it fit," Mr. Henry inquired, "that Job should quarrel with God as to his particular providences to him, when he was so unacquainted with the methods of his providence in general?" He then preached from Romans 5 : 14: "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." After ably illustrating the dominion of death, especially in reference to infants, who, though not guilty of actual sin, are the subjects of his kingdom, he thus addressed such as were, or had been, called to lose their little ones: "Resign, and give up your dying children to God. *They* cannot do it. You must do it for them. Father, into thy hands I commit my child's spirit. They are his by right; and his by your consent. You should restore them when he calls for them, and do it freely. I know it is hard, but it must be done. Let their death bring your sin to remembrance. Did you not sin in an inordinate desire of children? Perhaps, in discontent, or poverty, you have thought them too many. It may be you were overfond of them, or too indulgent. My pride, my passion, my covetousness, these slew my child. Learn to bear it patiently. Do not murmur. If I am bereaved of my children, said the patriarch, I am *bereaved;* not, I am undone. The Shu-

namite said, It is well, for all is well that God doeth."

In the review which Mr. Henry penned on the termination of this year, he evidently had the scenes through which he had passed full in view. Yet it is worthy of notice how entire is the absence of either complaint or repining. There is, indeed, an expression of sorrow; but it arose from the tenderness of a contrite spirit; it stands associated with gratitude; and was influenced, and rendered even sacred, by the aspirations of evangelical hope. "I am now come," he says, "to the close of another year, which has begun and ended with a Sabbath. I have received many mercies the year that is past. I have been brought low, and helped. My dear wife is spared. I am yet in the land of the living, though many have been taken away. But how little have I done for God. What will become of me, I know not. I find little growth. If any thing hath at any time affected me this year, it hath been some sweet desires of the glory which is to be revealed. I have often thought of it as that which would help me in my present duty."

CHAPTER V.

Death of Mr. Warburton—Death of Philip Henry—Reflections on the event—Further bereavements, and Letter occasioned by them—Death of his daughter Ann—Devout exercises on his Birthday and the close of the year—Attention to the orphan children of Mrs. Radford.

For a few years, the candle of the Lord shone upon Mr. Henry almost without interruption, and, comparatively, he enjoyed rest. But even in seasons of rejoicing, he had learned to remember "the days of darkness." And there can be no question that the sanctified mercies, which, from his papers, he seems to have experienced, had a salutary influence upon the trials through which he was soon to pass. Sometimes he expatiated upon the goodness of God in affording to his people extraordinary consolations, that they might be the better fitted to endure affliction when it might be sent; observing that "those who were to be witnesses of Christ's agony, were the witnesses of his transfiguration."

The return of the chastening hand of God upon him, may be assigned to April, 1696. On the 14th of that month, his father-in-law, Mr. Warburton, was taken, in a good old age, to his final home. There was every thing in the event to mitigate grief; surprise had been prevented by long expectation, and by the pressure of complicated infirmi-

ties; and death, beyond all doubt, was "gain" to him. Still, notwithstanding every alleviation, the stroke was deeply felt.

But this was only preparatory to another afflictive dispensation. His own father, in the enjoyment of ordinary health, and active usefulness, and far from being advanced in years, was shortly afterwards suddenly arrested by sickness, and, in a few hours, translated to heaven. The day was, indeed, a day of grief, and of the deepest sorrow. No representation can equal his own account of the melancholy event.

"JUNE 23, 1696. This afternoon, about three o'clock, my father's servant came for the doctor, with the tidings that my dear father was taken suddenly ill. I had then some of my friends about me, and they were cheerful with me, but this struck a damp upon all. I had first thought not to have gone till the next day, it being somewhat late, and very wet; and had written half a letter to my dear mother, but I could not help going; and I am glad I did go, for I have often thought of that, 2 Kings, 2 : 10, 'If thou see me when I am taken up from thee,' etc. The doctor and I came to Broad Oak about eight o'clock, and found him in great extremity of pain: nature, through his great and unwearied labors, unable to bear up, and sinking under the load. As soon as he saw me, he said, 'O son, you are welcome to a dying father; I am now ready to

be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. The Lord bless you, and grant that you may do worthily in your generation, and be more serviceable to the church of God than I have been.' Such was his great humility to the last. And when I replied, 'O, sir, pray for me that I may but tread in your steps,' he answered, 'Yea, follow peace and holiness, and let them say what they will.' More he would have said, to bear his dying testimony to the way in which he had walked, but nature was spent, and he had not strength to express it. A little after midnight, my mother holding his hands as he sat in bed, and I holding the pillow to his back, he very quietly, and without any struggling, groan, or rattling, breathed out his dear soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he had faithfully served.

"And now, what is this that God hath done unto us? The thing itself, and the suddenness of it, are very affecting; but the wormwood and the gall in it is, that it looks like a token of God's displeasure to us who survive. The Lord calls my sins to remembrance this day, that I have not profited by him while he was with us as I should have done. Our family worship this morning was very melancholy; the place was *Allon-bachuth*, the oak of weeping; the little children were greatly affected, and among the neighbors was heard nothing but lamentation and mourning; my dear mother cast

down, but not in despair. I, for my part, am full of confusion, and like a man astonished."

On Friday following, the corpse being yet unburied, the time appointed for keeping a public fast arrived. Prevented by the solemn occurrence from observing it at Chester, Mr. Henry improved it at Broad Oak. His own memorandum is as uncommon as it is instructive, and demonstrates not only an astonishing degree of self-command, but also a devotedness to the glory of God which is truly admirable.

"JUNE 26, 1696. This day is appointed a public fast; my place is now vacant; it did not use to be so, but God will have it so now. I had thought not to have done any thing at Broad Oak, and had given notice accordingly; but I see the people come in, and are greatly affected that their minister should be taken away from them, just before a fast which he had given notice of on the Lord's day, both morning and evening, and had earnestly pressed them to the due observation of it. I remember I had often heard my father say, 'weeping must not hinder sowing;' I therefore thought it my duty to spend two or three hours in the meeting-place, putting the people in mind that we had kept too many fasts with dry eyes, under melting ordinances, but God had caused us to keep this fast with wet eyes, under a melting providence. I preached from 2 Kings, 13 : 20 : 'Elisha died, and the bands of the

Moabites invaded the land.' The removal of public useful instruments is a sad presage of public dreadful judgments."

Mr. Henry's diary furnishes a continuation of the affecting narrative.

"JUNE 27. The day of my father's funeral; melancholy work. O that by this providence I might contract an habitual gravity, seriousness, and thoughtfulness of death and eternity. Our friends most affectionately sympathize with us, and do him honor at his death. How has this providence made Broad Oak, like a wilderness, desolate and solitary; and the poor people, as sheep without a shepherd."

"JULY 1. I returned late to Chester, and found the children well. The next day I studied, and preached the lecture from 2 Peter, 1 : 13, 14 : 'Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.' O that it might be preached to my own heart, and written there; that in consideration of my being to depart hence shortly, I may double my diligence.

"And now I have had time to reflect on this sad providence. What shall I say to these things?

"1. I bless God that ever I had such a father, whose temper was so very happy, and his gifts and graces so very bright; one that recommended relig-

ion, and the power of godliness, by a cheerful and endearing conversation; that had himself, and taught others, the art of obliging. I bless God that I had him so long, that he was not removed from me when I was a child; that I have not been left to myself, to be a grief and heaviness to him; nothing made me differ from the worst, but the free grace of God; to that grace be the glory of all the benefit that my father was to me, and the comfort I was to him.

"2. I have a great deal of reason to be humbled, and ashamed, that I have profited and improved no more by my relation to so good a man; that I have not better transcribed that fair copy of humility, meekness, candor, and zealous piety. O that the remembrance of him may have a greater influence upon me than the personal converse had!

"3. Death comes nearer and nearer to me. 'Lord, make me to know mine end, and teach me to number my days.' In January last, death came into our classis, and removed good Mr. Kinaston of Knutsford; in February, death came into the Friary," that part of the city where Mr. Henry resided, "and took away Mrs. Cook; in March, death came into my house, and carried away my cousin Aldersey; in April, it came into our family, in the death of my father Warburton; at the end of May, I said with thankfulness, Here is a month past in which I have not buried one friend; but June has brought it nearest of all, and speaks very loud to me to be

ready to go after. The Lord prepare me for a dying hour, that will come certainly, and may come suddenly; that when it comes I may have nothing to do *but* to die.

"4. The great honor and respect paid to his memory, and the good name he has left behind him, should encourage me to faithfulness and usefulness. The Scripture is fulfilled: 'Them that honor me, I will honor,' and 'Before honor is humility.'

"5. This should bring me nearer to God, and make me live more upon him, who is the fountain of living waters. My dear father was a counsellor to me, but Christ is the wonderful counsellor. He was an intercessor for me, but Christ is an intercessor that lives for ever, and is, therefore, able to save to the uttermost. Nor are the prayers that he has put up for me and mine lost, but I trust we shall be reaping the fruit of them now he is gone. I have had much comfort in hearing God speak to me by this Scripture: 'Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth?' Jer. 3 : 4. My dear father wrote to me lately upon the death of my father Warburton, 'Your fathers, where are they? One gone, and the other going; but you have a good Father in heaven, that lives for ever.' Abba, Father, the Lord teach me to cry so, and to come into the holiest as to my Father's house; and let these things be written upon my heart. Amen, Amen."

On the next sacramental occasion he again attempted, with great seriousness and deliberation, to improve the event; being desirous, as he expressed it, to bring the ordinance home to the providence, and to have a particular reference to it in the covenant which he was to renew with God at his table. His views may be gathered from his own words:

"1. I would, in this ordinance of the Lord's supper, very particularly eye God as a father, as *my* Father. My father who is gone, was to me a faithful reprover, teacher, and counsellor. I desire, therefore, at this time, more expressly than ever, to take the Spirit of God to be my reprover, teacher, and counsellor. I was often refreshed in visiting my father, and conversing with him; I would, by the grace of God, have more fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, whom I may be free with.

"2. There are some things I would more particularly engage myself to, upon this providence; the Lord direct, confirm, and ratify good resolutions. I will now labor and endeavor, in the strength of the grace of Christ, and the Lord give me a sufficiency of his grace,

"(1.) To be more grave and serious; partly as the fruit of this sad and solemn providence, which should not only affect me for the present, but alter me for the future, and make me habitually more serious; partly because, my father being now re-

moved, I have almost lost the epithet of a young man, which uses to pass for some excuse. It is time to lay aside vanity.

"(2.) To be more meek and humble, courteous and candid; because these were the graces that my dear father was eminent for, and God owned him in them, and men honored him for them. I am sensible of too much hastiness of spirit. I would learn to be of a cool, mild spirit.

"(3.) To be more diligent and industrious in improving my time, for I see it is hastening off apace; and I desire to have it filled up, because I see I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, and there is no working in the grave."

The work of the day being over, he goes on to remark, "I have been full of distractions, which have much discouraged me; yet I had some communion with God in this day's work, beyond what I expected, though not what I earnestly desired. I have solemnly renewed my covenants with the Lord at his table, and particularly those above-written. The Lord give me his grace, that having made these vows, I may make them good."

Honorable as the preceding extracts unquestionably are to the memory of one of the most illustrious men whose name has been perpetuated in the churches, it is difficult to say whether they do not shed equal lustre upon the bereaved and heavenly-minded writer. Where shall we find the indications

of a deeper or more chastened sorrow, or the tokens of more lowly resignation, or the aspirations of more sacred desires, or the evidences of more pure and elevated piety?

The following memoranda, written at subsequent periods, and more remote from the bitter scene, discover a similar spirit, and breathe a fragrance no less celestial.

"October 18, 1696. This day completes the thirty-fourth year of my age. I have endeavored this morning to get my heart affected with the sin in which I was born, and with the sins of my life hitherto; and with the mercy of my birth, and the mercies of my life hitherto. The Lord enable me to live a life of repentance, and a life of thankfulness."

"December 31, 1696. This year is at an end. On the first day of it, I preached from Proverbs 27 : 1, 'Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.' My fathers, where are they? And where am I? Hasting after them. I have lost much time this year; but if, through grace, I have got any good, it is a greater indifferency to the things of this world. The Lord increase it."

During the following year, Mr. Henry was called to experience further bereavements. In the month of August three of his sisters were successively seized with alarming illness. One of them, Mrs.

Tylston, recovered; but the other two, Mrs. Radford and Mrs. Hulton, both exemplary Christians, entered into rest. On this occasion he wrote, "I find it hard to submit. Let the grace of Christ be sufficient for me. I have said it, and I do not unsay it—Lord, thy will be done."

On the death of Mrs. Hulton, which occurred about three weeks later than Mrs. Radford's, he addressed to another sister the following admirable letter. The advice which it contains to Christian mourners can never be out of season; and the train of thought is as felicitous as the testimony to the deceased is honorable and exciting.

"For Mrs. Savage, at Wrenbury Wood.

"CHESTER, September 8, 1697.

"MY DEAR SISTER—I find it very easy to say a great deal to aggravate our loss; and losers think they may have leave to speak. I can say that I have lost, not only a sister, but a true friend; one of my 'helpers in Christ Jesus;' and one that was to me 'as my own soul.' To lose such an one, in the midst of her days, at such a time as this, when so many decline, what shall I say to it? I endeavor to *silence* myself with this, that the Lord hath done it, who gives not account of any of his matters, and in whose hands we and all our comforts are, 'as the clay in the hand of the potter.'

"But there is something more for us to *satisfy* ourselves with. The cloud has a bright side as well

a dark one. If we look upon this providence as sent to call a dear friend home to heaven, and to help us onward in our way thither, the thing hath quite another aspect. Are we not born from heaven, and bound to heaven? Is not that our home, our country? And are our relations any the less ours for being removed thither? And how long do we expect to stay behind? We knew not the other day that it was so little a while and we should not see her; and alas, now it is but a little while, and we shall see her, because we 'go to the Father.'

"There is matter for praise and thanksgiving, even in this sad providence: that we had such a relation—that we had her so long, and had so much comfort in her—that she shone so illustriously in gifts and graces—that she was enabled to finish well, and had, as she said, 'hope in her death;' she blessed God for the Scriptures, which were her cordial, and did not seem to be under any cloud as to her comforts—that she hath left a good name behind her: she dies as much lamented, as, I think, any woman in Chester since I knew it; for 'her hands and lips fed many'—that she hath left children behind her, who we hope may live to glorify God in this world—and that we do not 'sorrow as those who have no hope.' I shall want her converse, and you her correspondence; but let us both converse and correspond the more with Jesus Christ,

and that will help us to make up the want; nay, that will be 'far better.'

"Good Mr. Lawrence hath helped us well to improve the providence. The Lord help us with grace sufficient. A letter from our Friend in heaven is better than one from the best friend we have on earth. The Lord perfect what concerns you. Let us learn to sing both of mercy and judgment; and to sing unto God of both, till we come to sing of mercy only in the world of everlasting mercy. Our dear love to you and the children. I rest,

"Your affectionate brother,

"M. H."

On the arrival of another birthday anniversary, Mr. Henry marked it by reflections as appropriate and sensible as those which have already been noticed. These reflections, though brief, are very comprehensive.

"October 18, 1697. Through the good hand of my God upon me, I have finished my thirty-fifth year—one-half of the age of man: as if now in the zenith, it *is* high noon with me; but my sun may 'go down at noon.' I was affected this morning, when alone, in thinking *what* I was born! A rational creature, a helpless creature, and a sinful creature. *Where* I was born! In the church of God; in a land of light; in a house of prayer. What I was born *for!* To glorify God my Maker, and prepare to get to heaven."

The commencement of the next year was marked with equal seriousness.

"JANUARY 1, 1698. My family is now in peace and health, through the goodness of God; but I know not what a day, much less a year, may bring forth. I have begged to be ready for the trials and afflictions of the year, and for death, if it comes; thinking this day what a mercy it is to be born in a land where God is known, and not where he is an unknown God. I begin the year with a solemn, renewed dedication of myself, my whole self, to God in Christ, as my God, and Father, and portion. Let this be the axis and centre of every year's revolution. Amen. O Lord, so be it."

During this year Mr. Henry visited London for the first time since his settlement in Chester. The same tender regard for the glory of his Master, which has been so uniformly conspicuous, marked both the commencement and the prosecution of his journey. Before his departure, his friends were convened to implore a blessing on the undertaking; and his praise abounded, that he was not "forced from home, nor going to follow a roving fancy, nor to seek his fortune." During his stay in the metropolis, he preached almost daily, with great acceptance and favor. When he returned home, he carried with him the praises and admiration of his fellow-men and of his fellow-Christians. But neither the attentions which he received, nor the pop-

ularity with which his services were marked, produced any undue exaltation. On the contrary, they seem to have increased his sense of unmerited goodness, and to have filled him with penitence and astonishment. Under the date of October 18, 1698, he writes, "I have now weathered about thirty-six years. So long have I cumbered the ground, and yet I am spared; others, much more useful, have never attained this age. I admire the patience of God, and I wonder at my own folly, that being upon the brink of an awful, eternal state, I am so little affected with it. The Lord teach me with a strong hand."

Soon afterwards another afflictive event occurred, which made an impression upon both Mr. and Mrs. Henry unusually deep, and which, on account of the ample scope which it furnished and secured for the renewed exercise of those principles which have already been so prominently exhibited, deserves more than mere registration. Their little daughter Ann, being attacked by the measles, sunk almost immediately into the arms of death. The surprise of her agitated parents in this bereavement was the greater, because, as Mr. Henry observed, though many children in Chester had the disease at the same time, yet he knew of none that died by it but his own child. "God in mercy," was the beautiful and appropriate supplication of Mrs. Savage, "support and comfort the tender mother, that she may be a

pattern of patience and quiet submission; forasmuch as it is fit the Master of the garden should pluck off which flower he pleases."

Nor were the sentiments of Mr. Henry less beautiful, less appropriate, or less instructive. "My desire," he said, "is to be sensible of the affliction, and yet patient under it. It is a rod, a smarting rod. God calls my sin to remembrance; the coldness of my love to himself; my abuse of spiritual comforts. It is a rod in the hand of my *Father*. I desire in it to see a father's authority, who may do what he will, and a father's love, who will do what is best. We resigned the soul of the child to Him who gave it; and, if the little ones have their angels, doubted not of their ministration in death, we have hope, through grace, that it is *well* with the child. Little children in heaven we look upon as the Via Lactea, the individuals scarce discernable, but altogether beautifying the heavens. We spent the day in sorrow for our affliction, our friends sympathizing with us; one day committing the immortal soul to God; this day committing the dust to the dust of the earth, as it was. I am 'in deaths oft.' Lord, teach me how to 'die daily.' I endeavored, when the child was put into the grave, to act faith upon the doctrine of the resurrection, believing in him who quickeneth the dead."

Having completed his thirty-seventh year, Mr. Henry inserted the following remarks in his diary:

"October 18, 1699. I desire to be affected with God's goodness to me in my birth. I bless God that I have no cause to curse the day wherein I was born, but having obtained help of God, I continue to this day. I desire to be thankful to God, that he has not left me to live an idle life; but I have reason to lament my sins, and my sinful thoughts, by which I have lost much time. I have reason to acknowledge God's goodness to me, in giving me so great a degree of bodily health and strength above many of my brethren. I find not any sensible decay or prejudice by my work; but I know that 'my soul is continually in my hand,' and I am not sure to live another year."

At the close of the year he also writes:

"December 31, 1699. I asked by earnest and importunate supplication,

"1. For mercy and grace for my own soul; that while I preach to others, I myself may not be cast away; that my corruptions may be mortified, and the interest of Christ preserved and advanced within me. I would wrestle with God for his Spirit to cleanse and sanctify me.

"2. For strength and success in my ministerial work, direction in the choice of subjects, and the guidance and assistance of the Spirit in studying sermons, to secure me from error and mistake, to lead me into all truth, and to furnish me with acceptable words; to be in me a Spirit of supplica-

tion. And that the blessing of God may accompany all my endeavors. O that I may be instrumental to win souls to Christ, and to build them up; that I may not labor in vain, but that God would give the increase. It is still my heart's desire to be more ready and more mighty in the Scriptures.

"3. For the staying of God's controversies with me and my family; that God would make no further breaches. But this with submission to his blessed will.

"4. For the sanctifying of the breaches which have been made, that the impression of the providences of the year may not wear off or be forgotten; but that I may see 'my soul to be in my hand continually.'

"5. For the beheaded families, the widows and fatherless," etc.

Mr. Henry did not, however, satisfy himself with *praying* for the fatherless. He espoused the cause of his sister Radford's orphan children, three daughters and one son, who were left quite unprovided for. The situation in which he was thus placed was new to him, and involved duties which interfered in a measure with his ministerial work; but it gave occasion for a further display of his varied and eminent virtues. Nor should it be omitted, that Mrs. Henry heartily concurred in his kind designs, and aided their advancement; and, amidst numerous and increasing avocations, treated the children with

a kindness and assiduity truly maternal. Some of them remained in the family for several years: they all profited by instruction; and acknowledged with gratitude the tender and affectionate attention of both their uncle and aunt. "He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, will he pay him again." As Christian parents know not what their own children may need, when they themselves are taken from them, so according to their ability should they commiserate the orphan children of others; and Jehovah's promise herein secures, in one way or another, a rich reward.

CHAPTER VI.

Devout commencement of the year—Self-dedication—Birth-day memorials—Reflections and resolutions at the close and commencement of the year.

THERE is often a great degree of uniformity in the life of a man of Mr. Henry's pursuits and character. Whilst the wicked are like the troubled sea, which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, the godly man, the pious, devoted pastor, frequently pursues the even tenor of his way, with but few incidents occurring to interest the spectator of his

course. This was especially the case with the subject of this memoir at the commencement, and for a few years following the commencement of the eighteenth century. The present chapter will therefore be devoted to a few continuous extracts from his diary, which tend eminently to show that if there were few striking external circumstances occurring during this period, the mind and heart of the man of God were ripening for further usefulness on earth and higher glory in heaven.

"This new-year's day," probably January 1, 1700, "I have solemnly renewed the resignation and surrender of my whole self to God, as my God, deliberately, and upon good considerations. I have renounced the world and the flesh, as knowing they cannot make me happy; and have devoted my whole self to the blessed Spirit, to be enlightened, and sanctified, and so recommended to the Son, as qualified for an interest in his mediation, according to the tenor of the Gospel. I likewise devote myself, through the Spirit, to the Lord Jesus Christ, as my Advocate with the Father, relying upon Christ's righteousness alone; for, without him, I am less than nothing, worse than nothing. I likewise devote myself, through the Lord Jesus Christ, to God the Father, as my chief good and highest end; as the author of my being, to whom I am obliged in duty; and the felicity of my being, to whom I am obliged in interest. O Lord, truly I am thy servant;

may I ever be free in thy service, and never desire to be free from it. Nail my ear to thy door-posts, and let me serve thee for ever."

"1701, JANUARY 1. I solemnly renew the dedication of myself unto God, thankfully acknowledging and admiring his patience and forbearance towards me, that he has continued such a dry and barren tree as I am in his vineyard for so many years, and continued to me the gifts of his bounty and grace; and particularly acknowledging the last year to have been a year of much mercy, especially in the encouragement given to my ministry;—

"Lamenting and bewailing my great unfruitfulness, and that I have governed my thoughts, appetites, passions, and words, no better; that I have husbanded my time and opportunities no better; and improved so little in knowledge and grace, and done so little to the honor of my great Creator and Redeemer;—

"But being also more and more confirmed in my belief of the being and attributes of God, of the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ between God and man, and of the reality and weight of invisible things, and being more and more satisfied that this is the true grace of God wherein I stand, and more fully resolved, in the strength of God, to stand in it;—

"I do solemnly resign and give up my whole self to God in Jesus Christ. I commit my soul and all

the concerns of my spiritual state to the grace of God, and to the word of his grace, subjecting myself to the conduct and government of the blessed Spirit, and to his influences and operations, which I earnestly desire and depend upon for the mortifying of my corruptions, the strengthening of my graces, the furnishing of me for every good word and work, and the ripening of me for heaven.

"I commit my body, and all the concerns of my outward condition, to the providence of God, to be ordered and disposed by the wisdom and will of my heavenly Father. Not knowing the things which may befall me this year, I refer myself to God. Whether it shall be my dying year or no, I know not; but it is my earnest expectation and hope, that the Lord Jesus Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or death, by health or sickness, by plenty or poverty, by liberty or restraint, by preaching or silence, by comfort or sorrow. Welcome, welcome the will of God, whatever it be. The Lord give me grace to stand complete in it."

"October 18, 1701. This day, through the good hand of my God upon me, I have finished the thirty-ninth year of my pilgrimage, and having obtained help of God, I continue hitherto, knowing whom I have trusted, and trusting whom I have known. The greatest comfort of my life has been, that God has been pleased to use me for his service, and my greatest grief, that I have been so little serviceable to him.

I have thought much this day, what a great variety of cross events I am liable to while in the body, and how uncertain what may befall me in the next year of my life, pain, or sickness, broken bones, loss in my estate, death of dear relations, reproach, divisions in the congregation, public restraints and troubles; my fortieth year may be as Israel's was, the last of my sojourning in this wilderness. The worst of evils would be sin and scandal. The Lord keep me from that, and fit me for any other."

"DECEMBER 31, 1701. Believing prayer to be an instituted way of communion with God, and fetching in mercy and grace from him, I have comfort in it daily; my daily prayers are the sweetest of my daily comforts. Having of late had my body feasted above the ordinary meals, I desire this day to have my soul fed more plentifully with the duty of prayer, and thus to close the year, which, Janus-like, looks both ways. I have not had this year such remarkable afflictions as some other years. The greatest has been the death of my dear and honorable friend, Madam Hunt of Boreatton. But my errands to the throne of grace to-day are,

"1. By way of lamentation and humiliation.

"I have reason to lament greatly the strength of my own corruptions and weakness of my graces. By reason of the former, I am as smoking flax; by reason of the latter, as a bruised reed. I am still full of vain thoughts, and empty of good thoughts.

Many of my secret prayers are wretchedly disfigured and spoiled by a multitude of distractions and diversions of mind; the flesh and the things of the flesh still minded, to the prejudice of the Spirit, and the neglect of the things of the Spirit.

"I have lost a great deal of precious time, and not filled it up, or else I might have gone farther forward in my notes on the evangelist John.* Sins easily beset me, and I do not the things that I would.

"I have very much reason to bewail my manifold defects in my ministerial work, my coldness in prayer, that I speak not of the things of God with more clearness and concern. O, how many, how great, are the iniquities of my holy things!

"I bewail the little success of my ministry, and the miscarriages of some this year, for hereby my God will humble me. Grief also, great grief for the sin of ——: some of the young whom I have catechized and taken pains with, are no comfort to me. Lord, show me wherefore thou contendest with me.

"The low condition of the church of God ought

* This was written several years before Mr. Henry's Exposition upon the New, or even the Old Testament appeared. In the following extract from the preface to the first volume of that great work, the allusion is satisfactorily explained. "It has long been my practice, what little time I had to spare in my study from my constant preparations for the pulpit, to spend in drawing up expositions upon some parts of the New Testament, not so much for my own use, as purely for my own entertainment, because I knew not how to employ my thoughts and time more to my satisfaction."

to be greatly lamented; the Protestant interest small, very small; a decay of piety; attempts for reformation ineffectual. Help, Lord!

"2. By way of prayer and supplication. I have many errands at the throne of grace this day.

"The pardon of sin, victory over my corruptions and temptations, mortifying my lusts, which go not forth but by prayer and fasting. In reference to sin, I desire I may be enabled to act faith upon Rom. 6 : 14, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace;' and Ezek. 36 : 25–27, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,' etc.

"The increase of my ministerial gifts, a sound judgment, a clear expression, a door of utterance, readiness in the Scriptures; in reference to which, I desire I may be helped to act faith upon Exod. 4 : 12, 'Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say;' and John 14 : 26, 'He shall teach you all things.'

"The success of my ministerial labors, that sinners may be converted, saints built up, and the congregation flourish; in reference to this, I desire to act faith on Matt. 28 : 20, 'Lo, I am with you always;' and Isa. 55 : 10, 11, 'As the rain cometh down,' etc.

"The blessing of God upon my wife and children; that God will give his grace to my dear little ones, and drive out the foolishness bound up in their hearts; in reference to which I desire to act faith on Isa. 44 : 3, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.'

"My other dear relations I would recommend to God's protection and blessing in prayer; my friends, acquaintance, brethren in the ministry, in London, in Dublin, in Cheshire, and Lancashire particularly; and the congregation at Broad Oak, and their minister, some members of parliament, and other gentlemen of my acquaintance."

"JANUARY 1, 1702. The covenant of grace being a new covenant, because *ever* new, and often to be renewed, I have, this new-year's day, early in the morning, while it is yet dark, solemnly renewed it upon my knees: and be it a memorandum indeed, ever remembered, and never forgotten.

"Humbly acknowledging my dependence upon God, as my Creator and the Author of my being; my obligations in duty to him as my sovereign Lord and Ruler, and my engagements in gratitude to him as my Protector and Benefactor; and mentioning, with thankfulness, the many mercies of my life hitherto, and particularly those of the year past; during which I have found myself the care of a very kind Providence, which has made the steps of my pilgrimage comfortable; which has preserved to me

the use of my reason and understanding, limbs and senses; hath continued my liberty and opportunity to exercise my ministry; hath provided plentifully for me and my family, and loaded me daily with his benefits. For all which I praise his name, and for the mediation of Jesus Christ, to which I owe all.

"Acknowledging, also, and lamenting the remaining strength of my corruptions, and my bent to backslide from the living God, taking to myself the shame of my many defects and follies, notwithstanding my frequent renewing of my covenant with God, and flying to Christ for righteousness, pardon, and peace.

"I once more bind my soul with a bond to be the Lord's wholly, and only, and for ever his. Into thy hands, O God, I commit my spirit, to be ruled, cleansed, and sanctified throughout, qualified for thy service in this world, and for the fruition of thee in the other. My body I present unto thee a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, for it is my reasonable service. My ministry I devote to thy honor, and the continuance and success of it I submit to thy will. All my worldly comforts I lay at thy feet, to be disposed of as thou pleasest. My life itself is thine; O God of my life, 'my times are in thy hand.' Whatever may be the events of this year, let divine grace be sufficient for me, to enable me to accommodate myself to the will of God in them; and then nothing can come amiss. If God will be with me,

and keep me in the way that I go, throughout the remaining part of my pilgrimage in the world where I am but a stranger, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and a heart to love him, and serve him, and live to him, so that I may come at last to my heavenly Father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God, my Lord and my God for ever. Amen. Hallelujah.

"MATTHEW HENRY."

"OCTOBER 18, 1702. This day I have completed the fortieth year of my life; of *life* did I say? Rather, indeed, of *my* inactivity and folly, but of the tender mercy, kindness, and forbearance of God towards me. To Christ my Mediator I joyfully acknowledge myself a debtor for the supports, and aids, and comforts of life; and to that same Christ I wholly trust, that I shall receive from my God, wonderfully propitiated, the forgiveness of my sins, grace for seasonable help, and preservation even unto eternal life."

"DECEMBER 31, 1702. 1. As to myself and family, the days of another year are numbered and finished—a year not made particularly remarkable by any great change in my circumstances; no new thing created, but

"(1.) The usual matter of complaint against myself; folly is still found, yea, bound up, in my heart; though I hope, through grace, corruption is dying, yet not without some struggles, and much opposition

from a naughty heart. I desire to lament my unskilfulness and unreadiness in Scripture, my dulness in holy duties, particularly in secret. I wish I had prayed more for the success of my ministry, but sometimes I have thought I should pray more for grace, to make me faithful myself, that I may be accepted of God, though not of men; but, perhaps, I should pray more for the prosperity of the work of God, even in my hand, though most unworthy; vain thoughts, crowds of them, are matter of complaint daily; never was corrupt soil more fruitful in weeds.

"(2.) The usual matter of thanksgiving to God. I have had great measure of health, few of my brethren so much. I note it, because, perhaps, the ensuing year may bring sickness or death with it. I have not ailed any thing considerable, and sometimes the highest degree of health is the next degree to sickness. I have not so many sensible memoranda of my frailty as those have that are often ailing. The Lord grant I may, by the power of grace, be kept more mindful of it.

"Ever since brother Radford died, which is now three years ago, death has made no breach among my relations. Since I set out in the world, I never was so long without the death of children, or others near and dear to me. My children are very healthful, and have had no ill accident. My dear wife, though often indisposed, yet, blessed be God, under

no languishing disease; and my dear mother still continued in usefulness.

"As to my ministry, that which has been most discouraging this year is, that few young persons have come into communion, I think fewer than any other year.

"As to my estate, I have lived comfortably upon it with what I have received here, but while in these circumstances, I cannot expect to lay by much; perhaps troubles may come which may sweep away all. I have some comfort, that I hope I do some good with what I have, and spend none of it ill.

"2. As to the public, the death of the king [William III.] this year has made a great change in the face of things, though not yet such a change as many feared. Our successes abroad, both by sea and land, have been very great, which magnifies the present government, and that we have reason to rejoice in. The discontented in the last reign are now pleased. I wish they may ever be so. The high-church are very high, both against the low and dissenters. Now, Lord, behold their threatenings. We are alarmed to think of sufferings, and we need such alarms.

"I have heartily wished that the bigotry of some violent conformists on the one side, and of some dissenters on the other, might drive the sober, moderate, and peaceful on both sides nearer together, and prepare things for a coalescence when God's time is

come; which I earnestly pray for, and which, perhaps, might be effected if they could disentangle themselves as much from the high-church as I think we are from the high-dissenters, or I wish we were.

"1703, JANUARY 1. 'Looking for the blessed hope.' This new-year's day I have in much weakness, and compassed about with many infirmities, upon my knees, made a fresh surrender of myself, my whole self, all I am, all I have, all I can do, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my Creator, Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor; all my affections to be ruled by the divine grace, and all my affairs to be overruled by the divine Providence, so that I may not come short of glorifying God in this world, and being glorified with him in a better.

"Confirming and ratifying all former resignations of myself to God, and lamenting all the want of conformity of my heart and life therewith, and depending upon the merit of the Redeemer to make this and all my other services acceptable, and the grace of the Sanctifier to enable me to make good these engagements, I again bind my soul with a bond to the Lord, and commit myself entirely to him; particularly as to the events of this year which I am now entering upon, not knowing the things that may abide me in it.

"If this year should be a year of continued health and comfort, I commit myself to the grace of God, to be preserved from carnal security, and to be

enabled in a day of prosperity to serve God with joy.

"If my opportunities, as a minister, should be this year continued, I commit my studies, and ministerial labors at home and abroad, to the blessing of God; having afresh consecrated them all to his service and honor, earnestly desiring mercy of the Lord to be faithful and successful.

"If I should be this year at any time tried with doubts concerning my duty, I commit myself to the divine conduct, with an unbiassed desire, praying to know what God will have me to do, with a fixed resolution by his grace to follow his direction in the integrity of my heart.

"If I should this year be afflicted in my body, family, name, or estate, I commit my all to the divine disposal. The will of the Lord be done, only begging that the grace of God may go along with the providence of God in all my afflictions, to enable me both to bear them well, and to use them well.

"If this year I should be disturbed or molested in the exercise of my ministry, if I should be silenced, or otherwise suffer for well-doing,* I commit

* These, and similar references to the troubles, dangers, and persecutions to which good men were exposed in the times in which Mr. Henry lived, cannot be read without mingled emotions of commiseration for the sufferers, and gratitude to God for casting our lot who live in the nineteenth century upon other times, when civil and religious liberty are better understood and more generally diffused and enjoyed. "The lines

the keeping of my soul to God as a faithful Creator, depending upon him to guide me in my call to suffer, and to make that clear, and to preserve me from perplexing snares; depending upon him to support and comfort me under my sufferings, and to bring glory to himself out of them; and then, welcome his whole will.

"If this year should be my dying year, as perhaps it may be, I commit my spirit into the hands of my Redeemer, to be washed with his blood, and presented in his arms with exceeding joy. My wife and children I commit to him, to be owned, blessed, and preserved by him when I am gone. 'In thee, O Lord, have I put my trust, let me never be ashamed.'"

"October 18, 1703. To-day is completed the forty-first year of my wandering in this wilderness. Very many of my days have slipped by fruitlessly and unprofitably. And, what ought to make me ashamed, all truly peaceful, and full of divine benignity, and ever to be recorded with gratitude to God. What remains I know not: a few days, perhaps, and full of trouble; but the will of the Lord be done. To me to live is Christ; so shall it always be, and eternally; and to die, gain."

"December 31, 1703." [After reciting, as on some former occasions, his sins and mercies, and

have fallen to us in pleasant places." What obligations do our privileges involve!

observing that even under the Gospel there must be a remembrance of sins every year, he proceeds,] "Not such a remembrance as speaks any deficiency in the sacrifice, as that under the law did, but such as speaks deficiency in my daily repentance, which ought therefore to be renewed, and the imperfection of the work of sanctification."

"Unfixedness of thought, a wretched desultoriness. Some speak of time well spent in thinking; but I find, unless in speaking, reading, or writing, my thinking doth not turn to much account. Though I have had comfort in some broken good thoughts, yet I can seldom fix my heart to a chain of them. O that the thought of my heart may be forgiven.

"I have oft bewailed my barrenness in good discourse, and unskilfulness in beginning it, and coldness of concern for the souls of others; and in reflection on this year, I find it has not been much better. I bless God I love good discourse, and would promote it, but I want zeal. The Lord pity me.

"I have great reason to be thankful for continued health, for comfort in my soul, not made a terror to myself. I have oft thought this year what a mercy it is to be kept out of the horrible pit and miry clay.

"I have had much satisfaction this year in my non-conformity, especially by reading Mr. Hoadley's

books, in which I see a manifest spirit of Christianity unhappily leavened by the spirit of conformity."

"January 1, 1704. Acknowledging my continued dependence upon God as my Creator, Preserver, and chief good; and my continued obligations to him in duty as my Lord and Ruler; and in interest, as my Benefactor and Protector; believing that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him—

"Relying upon the merit, mediation, and everlasting righteousness of my dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me, as my way to the Father, and the spotless robe wherein alone I can appear before him—

"And submitting my soul to the operation and influences of the blessed Spirit of grace, without which I am nothing, and can do nothing—

"Thankfully owning God's goodness to me the last year, in lengthening out my life, health, comfort in soul, peace, plenty, settlement, relations, liberty, and opportunity, and admiring his patience, forbearance, long-suffering, in sparing me in his vineyard, who deserved to have been cut down and cast into the fire as a barren tree—

"Lamenting my foolishness, the foolishness which is still bound up in my heart, and that which still breaks forth in my life; and particularly that my improvements in grace and usefulness last year did not answer the covenants which began it—

"Because of all this, I make a sure covenant, and write it.

"In the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, on which alone I depend to work all my works in me and for me, I covenant for this new year, and for my whole life, to walk closely with God in all holy conversation, to keep my heart with all diligence; and to thee, O my God, I commit the keeping of it. To take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; and do thou set a watch, O Lord, before the door of my lips. I covenant to redeem my time, and to thee, O God, do I consecrate this year, and all the hours of it. The Lord enable me to fill it up with good according as the duty of every day requires. I bind myself to follow the spirit of God in all my affections, and the providence of God in all my affairs, whatever God shall appoint me to this year; to health or sickness, to plenty or loss, to evil report or good report, to liberty or restraint, to the house of mourning or the house of rejoicing, to life or death. Behold, here I am, let him do with me as seemeth good in his eyes. Only, whatever the providence of God allots for me, let the grace of God be sufficient for me, to enable me to accommodate myself to it; and then welcome the will of God."

CHAPTER VII.

Journey to London—Hears John Howe—Mr. Henry's general health good—Sudden seizure and sickness—Anniversary reflections—Death of Mr. Henry's mother—Anniversary reflections.

In the early part of the year 1704, Mr. Henry, accompanied by Mrs. Henry, again visited the metropolis. The particular occasion of the journey does not appear. One remark, however, made by him on leaving Northampton, may be properly cited as indicative of the spirit in which he travelled; the same spirit, indeed, which gave consistency and elevation to his whole character, both at home and abroad. The remark was this:

"It is easy to leave an inn; why should it not be easy to leave this world, which is but an inn, to go to our house, our Father's house? The troubles of travelling exercise our patience and submission to God's will. By submission in lesser things, we learn it in greater. But they also give us to experience the goodness of God in our preservation, and encourage us to hope in that goodness in our journey for heaven."

The record of a sermon, which he heard preached on Sabbath morning, the day after his arrival in London, by the celebrated John Howe, is worthy of attention; it is perfectly characteristic of both

the parties; it is, moreover, fraught with universal instruction; and as embraced, may prove a balm of healing and refreshment to such as move heavily along the narrow way, under a prevailing sense of their own unworthiness.

"The text," says Mr. Henry, "was Jude 21; and I must never forget what he said in the close of the sermon. 'I would deal for your souls,' said the preacher, 'as for my own; and for myself, I declare before you all, I depend purely upon the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ for eternal life.'"

In due time, he found himself again in the midst of his beloved charge in Chester. Up to this period, Mr. Henry's health had continued good. But, henceforward, the inroads made upon his frame by disease were frequent and alarming.

On Lord's day, August 27, 1704, while reading the Scriptures during the morning service, he suddenly fainted; but, recovering speedily, he proceeded in his beloved work. Had he taken rest the subsequent effects would probably have been prevented. But, unskilled in the art of self-sparing, and impelled by holy zeal, instead of relaxing as he ought to have done, the next day he fulfilled an appointment to preach at Nantwich, and the day following, another at Haslington. The latter was a funeral sermon for an aged and faithful minister, pursuant to the desire of the deceased, and preached to a large congregation. These engagements, by

the excitement they produced, added much to his exhaustion.

On his return home the consequences were distinctly visible, and indisposition so much increased as to confine him altogether to the house. Not having for fifteen years been detained from public worship on the Sabbath, he felt the imprisonment very sensibly; but still not so as to overlook existing mercies. His fever continued more than three weeks; but he was able, during the whole time, with but one exception, as he himself expressed it, both "to light the lamps, and to burn the incense;" that is, daily to expound the Scriptures and pray in his family, morning and evening. On the recovery of his health, he did not wait for the Sabbath in order to resume his appearance in the sanctuary; but, being able, preferred appearing there on the lecture day; thus evincing his zeal and devotion. "I was willing," said he, "to go thither first, where I most desire to be. I would take the first opportunity of paying my vows."

The order of the history requires that further extracts from Mr. Henry's diary should be here inserted; which, it is presumed, the pious reader will not regret.

"1705. JANUARY 1. Not renouncing, but repeating and ratifying all my former covenants with God, and lamenting that I have not lived up more closely to them, I do, in the beginning of this new year,

solemnly make a fresh surrender of myself, my whole self, body, soul, and spirit, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; covenanting and promising, not in any strength of my own, for I am very weak, but in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, that I will endeavor this year to stand complete in all the will of God.

"I know this is the will of God, even my sanctification. Lord, grant that this year I may be more holy, and walk more closely than ever in all holy conversation. I earnestly desire to be filled with holy thoughts, to be carried out in holy affections, determined by holy aims and intentions, and governed in all my words and actions by holy principles. O that a golden thread of holiness may run through the whole web of this year.

"I know it is the will of God that I should be useful, and by his grace I will be so. Lord, thou knowest it is the top of my ambition in this world to do good, and to be serviceable to the honor of Christ, and the welfare of precious souls. I would fain do good in the pulpit, and good with my pen; and, which I earnestly desire to abound more in, to do good by my common converse. O that the door of my opportunities may be still open, and that my heart may be enlarged with holy zeal and activity for God this year; and that I may be thoroughly furnished with knowledge, wisdom, and grace, for every good word and work.

"If it be the will of God that this year should be a year of affliction to me, a year of sickness, or reproach, or loss; if my family should be visited, if my liberties should be cut short, if public troubles should arise, if any calamity should befall me which I am least apprehensive of now, I earnestly desire to submit to the divine disposal. Welcome the holy will of God. Let me have God's favor, and the assurances of that, and by his grace nothing shall come amiss to me.

"If it be the will of God that I should finish my course this year, let me be found of Christ in peace, and, by the grace of God, death shall be welcome to me. My wife and children and relations, my congregation which is very dear to me, my ministry, myself, and my all, I commit to God, whose I am, and whom I desire to serve. Let me be the Lord's only, wholly, and for ever. Amen. The Lord say Amen to it.

"October 18, 1705. I have this day completed the forty-third year of my useless life. By the grace of God I live; I hope in his mercy, and I pant for his glory. May the small remnant of my time be a season of repentance for the sins, and of gratitude for the mercies, of the former part of my life. May God be my sun and shield, and may I be his servant, and a subject of his kingdom, even unto the end, and for ever. Amen and amen."

"December 31, 1705. We bring our years to

an end, like a tale that is told. Lord, teach us to number our days.

"In the review of the year I find,

"1. That I have as much reason as ever to be thankful to God. It has been a year of much mercy. My life has been continued to the end of it, though many of my brethren in the ministry have been removed in the midst of their days, who, had they lived, would have done God more service than I can, particularly my dear brother Mr. Chorlton. I have had a good measure of health for my ministry and study; no returns or remains of my last year's illness.

"God has this year brought my children through the small-pox, and borne up my dear wife under great weakness.

"My mother, also, though brought low, has been helped.

"My door of opportunity continues open at home and abroad; and I am willing to hope some good is done.

"That which is especially remarkable as the mercy of this year, is the happy posture of our public affairs, particularly at home. After a mighty struggle, moderate counsels have prevailed. God has wonderfully inclined the queen's heart [Queen Anne] to such counsels, and useth her as an instrument of great good to the land, that the excellency of the power may be of God. Patrons of our

liberty have been strangely raised up among those who have no kindness for us, or our way. The intemperate acts of bigots have proved to make mightily against themselves; there are many adversaries, and yet the door continues open. Great endeavors used to render us contemptible, odious, dangerous, and what not, and yet we live and go on, and the young are coming in, and some hopeful cases. O that the power of godliness, holiness, seriousness, and heavenly-mindedness, might prevail more among us, and then we should have a very hopeful prospect. And who can tell but infinite wisdom may yet find out a way for comprehending us, though the present temper of our neighbors rather sets it at a greater distance than ever.

"2. I have reason to make the old complaint of dulness and weakness, and coldness of affection for divine things. The Lord strengthen the things which remain.

"Care about my children, providing something for them, has been often in my head; and, perhaps, more than it should be. Lord, I cast the care upon thee, who hast provided well for me; the Lord care for them, and teach me my duty, and then with him I leave the event."

"January 1, 1705–6. It is of the Lord's mercy that I am not consumed. By night, on my bed, I endeavored to seek him whom my soul loveth; and now I begin this new year,

"1. Earnestly praying for the graces of the year, with a humble subjection of soul to the blessed Spirit of God, that I may, some way or other, eminently honor and glorify God this year; that I may live this year to some purpose; to better purpose than I did the last. O that no temptation may so overtake me this year as to overcome me. To the conduct of divine grace, which is, I know, sufficient for me, I here solemnly resign myself, my thoughts, my affections, my will, and all the intents of my heart, to be directed into the right way, and kept and quickened in it. Let me this year receive grace for grace.

"2. Patiently waiting for the events of the year, with a humble submission to the holy will of God. I know not what the year shall bring forth; but I know it shall bring forth nothing amiss to me, if God be my God in covenant: if it bring forth death, *that*, I hope, shall quite finish sin and free me from it—Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. I commit my family to my heavenly Father; to God, even my own God, my father's God, my children's God. O pour out thy Spirit upon my seed; thy blessing, that blessing, that blessing of blessings, upon my offspring, that they may be praising God on earth when I am praising him in heaven. Amen, amen."

"JANUARY 1, 1707. My own act and deed, through the grace of God, I have made it many a

time, and now I make it the first act of this new year, to resign myself afresh unto the Lord, not only for the year ensuing, but for my whole life, and for ever.

"1. To thee, O God, I give up myself, to be used and employed for thee. I desire to live no longer than I may do thee some service. Make what use of me thou pleasest, only let me obtain mercy of the Lord, to be found diligent, humble, and faithful. O that the work of this year may be better done than that of the last, and my time more filled up; and that I may never grow weary of well-doing.

"2. To thee, O God, I give up myself, to be disposed of by thee as thou pleasest. I know not what the year may bring forth to me, or to my family. But welcome the holy will of God; and God, by his grace, make me ready for it. If it be the last year of my life, my dying year, may I but finish my course with joy; and farewell this world. Whatever afflictions may this year befall me, I desire none of them may move me from God and my duty."

Since the death of Mr. Henry's father, the afflictions which had befallen him had been mitigated by the preservation and general convalescence of his widowed mother. She had shared his trials; eased the burden of affliction by bearing a part of it; and, by the brilliancy of her Christian character, had

eminently adorned the Gospel, and encouraged her son in "the work of the Lord."

But now, declining health and advanced years intimated that a separation between parent and child was not far distant. And, at length, on the morning of Sabbath, May 25, 1707, he received the melancholy tidings of her departure.

In reference to this event, there is a short notice in the diary of her sorrowing son, which the reader will be pleased to have perpetuated. He says, "I find with the profits and rents of this current year, that there will be little more than to discharge my dear mother's funeral and legacies; but no debts at all. She lived with comfort; bore her testimony to the goodness of God's providence, which she had experienced all her days; did not increase what she had; nor coveted to lay up; but did good with it, and left a blessing behind her."

The anniversary reflections are thus continued in his diary:

"1707, October 18. To borrow Caleb's words, Joshua 14 : 10, the Lord has kept me alive these forty-five years. So long I have lived, and lived under the divine protection; a wasting candle kept burning. But to how little purpose have I lived! Thus long I have cumbered the ground. O that I may yet bear fruit."

"1707, December 31. As to the year past, I have as much reason as ever to lament my barren-

ness and unfruitfulness, that I have not made a better proficiency in knowledge and grace. I find myself growing into years; being now turned forty-five. I begin to feel my journey in my bones, and I desire to be thereby loosened from the world, and from the body. The death of my dear and honored mother this year, has been a sore breach upon my comfort; for she was my skilful, faithful counsellor; and it is an intimation to me that now, in the order of nature, I must go next. My estate is somewhat increased: the Lord enlarge my heart to do good with it; but as goods are increased, they are increased that eat them. My children are growing up, and that reminds me that I am going down. As to my ministry here, Mr. Mainwaring's leaving me, and his wife, has been very much my discouragement. But Providence so ordered it that Mr. Harvey's congregation are generally come in to us, or else we begin to dwindle, so that I should have gone on very heavily."

"January 1, 1707–8, early. Christ is a Christian's all; and he is my all.

"Unto thee, O blessed Jesus, my only Saviour and Redeemer, do I make a fresh surrender of my whole self this morning, body, soul, and spirit; to me to live is Christ, particularly this ensuing year.

"All my time, strength, and service, I devote to the honor of the Lord Jesus; my studies, and all my ministerial labors, and even my common actions.

It is my earnest expectation and hope, and I desire it may be my constant aim and endeavor, that Jesus Christ may be magnified in my body.

"In every thing wherein I have to do with God, my entire dependence is upon Jesus Christ for strength and righteousness; and whatever I do in word or deed, I desire to do all in his name, to make him my Alpha and Omega. The anointed of the Lord is the breath of my nostrils; through his hand I desire to receive all my comforts. I have all by him, and I would use all for him.

"If this should prove a year of affliction, a sorrowful year upon my account, I will draw all my supports and comforts from the Lord Jesus, and stay myself upon his everlasting consolations, and the good hope I have in him through grace.

"And if this should be my dying year, my times are in the hand of the Lord Jesus; and with a humble reliance upon his mediation, I would venture into another world, looking for the blessed hope. Dying as well as living, Jesus Christ will, I trust, be gain and advantage to me.

"Good Lord, keep this always in the imagination of the thought of my heart, and establish my way before thee."

"October 18, 1708. To-day I have finished the forty-sixth year of my life. My infancy, however, was useless; my childhood and youth were not directed to proper objects; and even in my maturer

age, how many months and days have I spent to little purpose! So that I have *lived* scarcely one-tenth part of my time. Forgive, O Lord, my idleness and sloth. For me to live, may it be Christ."

"JANUARY 1, 1708–9. The inscribing of a double year, eight and nine, puts me in mind to look back upon the year past, which I have reason to do with thankfulness for the many mercies with which God has crowned it; and with sorrow and shame for the many sins with which I have blotted it: and to look forward to the year now beginning, which I have endeavored to begin with God.

"My outward concerns, as to my health and safety, the prosperity of my affairs, provision for my family, the continuance of my life and the lives of my relations and friends, comfort in my children and congregation, I have committed, and do commit to the conduct and disposal of God's gracious providence, which I depend upon to order every thing for good to me. Here I am, let the Lord do with me and mine as seemeth good unto him. That Providence, I trust, will so order every event as that nothing shall be an invincible temptation to me to draw me from God and duty in any instance.

"The affairs of my soul, and all the concerns of the spiritual and divine life, I commit to the special grace of God, which I trust shall be sufficient for me, to enable me to keep a good conscience; to do my duty well as a master of a family, and as a min-

ister; to persevere to the end; and to finish well. Lord, do not leave me, nor forsake me; I will seek thy precepts. O, forsake me not utterly. The Lord 'preserve me to his heavenly kingdom.' Amen. Amen."

CHAPTER VIII.

Invitations to remove to London—An invitation from Hackney renewed—His determination to leave Chester—His reasons for this determination—Birthday memorial.

Ever after Mr. Henry's visit to London in the year 1698, he seems to have been an object of desire by almost every church, whose pastor, if at all renowned, was either removed to any other charge, or laid aside by death. And some of the efforts made to obtain his services were uncommonly bold and persevering.

On the death of the eloquent and learned Dr. Bates, at Hackney, one of the suburbs of the metropolis, he was solicited to accept the pastorate of the bereaved church and congregation; and, the better to insure success, the communication was made to him through his beloved friend, the Rev. John Shower, pastor of a church at the Old Jewry. It failed, however, of success. It is not necessary to particularize other similar invitations both from

London and important places in the country. Dr Bates was succeeded by the Rev. Robert Billio. Upon the death of Mr. Billio, which occurred in May, 1710, the solicitations of the congregation to Mr. Henry were renewed with increased importunity. Two visits were subsequently made by him to the destitute church, and, after long-continued and serious thought, not to say the most distressing varieties of mental conflict, he determined to leave Chester. The history and reasons of a determination so opposite to every former decision, may be stated somewhat at length, and may happily be stated in his own words, written whilst in London, on one of the two visits before mentioned.

"About midsummer, 1710, I had a letter from the congregation at Hackney, signifying to me that they had unanimously chosen me to be their minister, in the room of Mr. Billio, who was lately deceased of the small-pox; and to desire that I would accept of their invitation; in prosecution of which, they told me I should find them as the importunate widow, that would have no nay. I several times denied them; at length they wrote to me that some of them would come down hither; to prevent which, I being not unwilling to take a London journey in the interval between my third and fourth volume," of the Exposition, "I wrote them word I would come up to them, and did so in the middle of July; but was down again before the first Lord's day in

August; then I laid myself open to the temptation, by increasing my acquaintance in the city.

"They followed me after I came down, with letters to me, and to the congregation; in October I wrote to them, that if they would stay for me till next spring—which I was in hopes they would not do—I would come up, and make a longer stay for mutual trial; they wrote to me they would wait till then.

"In May, 1711, I went to them, and stayed till the end of July, and before I parted with them, signified to them my acceptance of their invitation, and my purpose to come to them, God willing, the following spring. The ministers there had many of them given it under their hands, that they thought it advisable, and for greater good, and a more extensive usefulness, that I should remove to Hackney.

"However, I was determined to deny them at Hackney, and had denied them, but that Mr. Gunston, Mr. Smith, and some others, came to me from London, and begged of me, for the sake of the public, that I would not deny them; which was the thing that turned the scales. I never had been, till this journey, so much as one first Lord's day of the month out of Chester, since I came to it twenty-four years ago.

"By this determination I brought on myself more grief, and care, and concern, than I could have

imagined, and have many a time wished it undone again; but having opened my mouth, I could not go back. I did with the utmost impartiality, if I know any thing of myself, beg of God to incline my heart that way which should be most for his glory; and I trust I have a good conscience, willing to be found in the way of my duty. Wherein I have done amiss, the Lord forgive me for Jesus' sake, and make this change concerning the congregation to work for good to it.

"Having this morning—as often, very often before—begged of God to give me wisdom, sincerity, and humility, and to direct my thoughts and counsels, now this important affair must at last be determined, I think it meet, having before set down the reasons for my continuing at Chester, now to set down the reasons which may induce me to accept of this invitation to Hackney, that it may be a satisfaction to me afterwards to review upon what grounds I went, and may be a testimony for me that I did not do it rashly.

"1. I am abundantly satisfied that it is *lawful* for ministers to remove, and in many cases highly expedient, and necessary to the edifying of the church; and this not only for the avoiding of evil, as in the case of persecution, which can be a reason no longer than while the persecution lasts, or of the uncomfortable disposition of the people, but for the attaining of a greater good, and the putting of a

minister into a larger sphere of usefulness; this has always been my judgment according to the word of God, and I have practised accordingly, in being often active in the removal of other ministers, which I have afterwards had satisfaction in. And this has been the judgment of the congregation at Chester, between whom and their ministers there have never been those solemn mutual engagements that have been between some other ministers and their congregations, nor any bond but that of love.

"2. My invitation to Hackney is not only unanimous, but very pressing and importunate, and the people here, in waiting so long for my determination, and in the great affection and respect they have showed to my ministry since I came among them, have given the most satisfying proof of the sincerity and zeal of their invitation; and upon many weeks' trial I do not perceive any thing in the congregation that is discouraging, but every thing that promiseth to make a minister's life both comfortable and useful.

"3. There seems to be something of an intimation of Providence in the many calls I have had in this way before, and particularly to this place upon the death of Dr. Bates, though I never, either directly or indirectly, sought them, but, on the contrary, did what I could to prevent them, and this particularly.

"4. There is manifestly a much wider door of

opportunity to do good, opened to me here at London, than at Chester, in respect to the frequency and variety of week-day occasions of preaching, and the great numbers of the auditors; the prospect I have of improving these opportunities, and of doing good to souls thereby, is, I confess, the main inducement to me to think of removing hither; and what I have seen while I have been here now, has very much encouraged my expectations of that kind.

"5. In drawing up and publishing my Expositions, and many other of my endeavors for the public service, I foresee it will be a great convenience to me to be near the press, and to have the inspection of it, and also to have books at hand that I may have occasion for in the prosecution of my studies, and learned men to converse with for my own improvement in knowledge, and to consult with upon any difficulty that may occur.

"6. I have followed Providence in this affair, and to the conduct of that, I have, if I know my own heart, in sincerity referred myself, hoping and praying, both myself, and my friends for me, that God would guide me with his eye, and lead me in a plain path. When I was purposing to send a final denial, Providence so ordered it that the very post before, I had a letter subscribed by divers of the London ministers, persuading me to accept that call; whereupon I wrote to them that I would come to them six months upon trial, thinking that they would not

have consented to be kept so long in suspense, but it proved that they did; and so I have been drawn step by step to this resolution, and though I have industriously sought, I have not found any thing on this side to break the treaty.

"7. I have asked the advice of ministers upon a fair representation of the case, which I drew up; and many, upon consideration of it, have given it under their hands that they think it advisable for me to remove, and none of them have advised me to the contrary, but have told me I am myself the most proper judge of it. Many private Christians also in London, and some that seem to me to be the most judicious and public-spirited, have by letters, when I was in Chester, and by word of mouth here, persuaded me to accept of this call, as judging that, by the blessing of God, I might be useful here to such a degree as to balance the inconveniency of my leaving Chester; nay, that even here, I might, in many respects, be serviceable to the country.

"8. I have some reason to hope that my poor endeavors in the ministry may, by the blessing of God, be more useful now to those to whom they are new, than to those who have been so long used to them, and so constantly; with whom also I trust another hand may do more good, as mine did, by the grace of God, in the first seven years of my being there. And I have known many congregations from whom ministers have removed, and those

to whom it caused the greatest uneasiness and discontent for the present, which yet have afterwards been so well settled beyond their own expectations under other ministers, that they have flourished even more than ever they had done before.

"9. Though the people at Chester are a most loving people, and many of them have had, and have, an exceeding value for me and my ministry, yet I have not been without my discouragements there, and those such as have tempted me to think that my work in that place has been in a great measure done; many that have been catechized with us, and many that have been long communicants with us, have left us, and very few have been added to us.

"10. Whereas I have been thought to have been useful in the country by my preaching, as God has enabled me in many places about, I have now reason to think, that though I should continue at Chester, I should be quite taken off from that part of my work, having found as I came up, and once before, that riding long journeys and preaching brought an illness upon me which I was never till the last winter visited with, so that my service would be wholly confined within the walls of Chester; whereas here, by divine assistance, I might do a great deal of work of that kind without that toil and peril.

"11. The congregation at Chester, though it cannot be expected they should consent to part with a

minister they have so long had a satisfaction in, yet they have been pleased, under their hands, to leave it to my own conscience and affection. Now, as to my own conscience, upon a long and serious consideration of the matter—and if I know my own heart an impartial one—and after many prayers to God for direction, I am fully satisfied that I may *lawfully* remove, and that there is a prospect of my being more useful if I do remove, and therefore it is *expedient* that I should; and as to my affections, though they are very strong towards Chester, yet I think they ought to be overruled by my judgment."

Another anniversary of his birthday now arrived, but the record makes no allusion to the situation in which he had placed himself. His mind seems to have been absorbed by the flight of time, and the nearer approach of eternity.

"October 18, 1711. I have now finished my seventh climacteric year, in which I have first felt the pain of the gravel and the stone, by which it is easy for me to discern that death is working in my body; for this disease is death begun; perhaps in a little time it will be death itself. I now enter upon the jubilee of my life, my fiftieth year; the *term* of life approaches; may I be better fitted for eternal life."

The preceding exercises of mind, in reference to his removal from Chester, after a ministry there of nearly a quarter of a century, show most conclu-

sively the integrity of Mr. Henry's mind, and his trembling solicitude to be found in the way of duty. In his first entrance upon the work of the ministry, he dreaded the thought of running before he was sent; and now, in the affair of his removal, he felt it to be a weighty and important step, to be determined only by plain intimations of Providence, and after much anxious deliberation and fervent prayer. Both churches and ministers of the present day, may learn valuable lessons of prudence and piety from this part of the commentator's history.

Notwithstanding the clearness of the case, in his call to remove, and the length of time which he took to make up his mind on the important step of leaving one field of labor and entering upon another, yet it appears his mind was ill at ease, from the godly fear that he might possibly have taken a wrong step. When he reached his new abode, he vented the anguish of his mind in sighs like these, "Lord, am I in the way? I look back with sorrow for leaving Chester; I look forward with fear; but unto thee I look up."

CHAPTER IX.

Some account of the manner in which Mr. Henry discharged the duties of the ministry at Chester.

Mr. Henry's history having been traced to the important period when he left Chester, the present chapter will be devoted to a review of his ministerial course during his abode in that city. Much instruction may be thus derived from an exhibition of his exemplary conduct, and of the truly Christian spirit which he uniformly displayed. By taking such a review it will be sufficiently apparent why it was that so much earnest desire prevailed in other churches, and among not a few of his more distinguished brethren, to secure his services in a wider and more inviting field of labor than that which he had occupied.

On the Sabbath, Mr. Henry met his congregation at nine o'clock, and commenced the services by singing the 100th Psalm. Praise was succeeded, for a few minutes, by prayer; he then read and expounded part of the Old Testament, proceeding regularly from the book of Genesis. After singing another psalm, about half an hour was devoted to intercession; the sermon followed, and usually occupied about an hour; he again prayed, and after singing, commonly the 117th Psalm, the benediction was

pronounced. The same order was observed in the afternoon, only he then expounded, with the same regularity, a part of the New Testament, and, at the close of the worship, sung either the 134th, or some part of the 136th Psalm.

In Mr. Henry's day, the church had not yet been blessed with the sweet, devotional, poetic effusions of Dr. Watts, whose "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" have eminently "made glad the city of our God;" and have given rise to numerous other similar productions. To supply the deficiency which was then felt, Mr. Henry made some attempts to compile and arrange a small collection of psalms and sacred hymns in verse, as may be seen by a reference to his Miscellaneous Works.

In the exercise of praise he greatly delighted; for it was beautifully suited to his lively and thankful temper. When young, he had heard his excellent father say, that "Our praying-days should be praising-days; that whatever the cup is, we should take notice of the mixtures;" and he never forgot it. He sometimes devoutly observed, that "A life of praise and a life of usefulness is a true *angelical* life."

In the exercise of public and social prayer, Mr. Henry was almost unrivalled. In his addresses to the throne of grace, there was no pompous finery; no abstruse and complex elaboration; no disgusting familiarity; no personal reproofs or compliments;

no vain repetitions; no preaching. When he professed to pray, he *prayed;* and his style was reverent, humble, simple, and devout. By impressive comprehensiveness, by the happiest adaptation of his petitions to circumstances, and by peculiar fervency of manner, he successfully interested and stimulated his fellow-worshippers. His habits evinced the truth of his recorded experience, that "*warm* devotions contribute much to communion with God." With regard to devotion, he sometimes said, "We should be in it *as* the angels, who are seraphim—burners;" and his own example beautified and confirmed the observation.

In supplication for mercy, Mr. Henry was very earnest and particular—pleading the name, and sufferings, and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, for pardon and peace. He was large and full in praying for grace, and used to mention the particular graces of the Holy Spirit, as faith, love, hope, patience, zeal, delight in God; earnestly begging that these might be truly wrought in all, and might be preserved, exercised, increased, and evidenced to the divine glory.

Some Christians are unfavorable to the use of the Lord's prayer. They imagine it to have been taught the disciples as members of the Jewish church, and adapted only to the time of waiting for Messiah's kingdom. Others advocate its adoption in secret only, founding their opinion upon the command,

"When *thou* prayest, enter into thy closet." But Mr. Henry, like his venerable progenitor, approved and used it, as a proper form, as well in public as in private. Yet by so doing he incurred censure. "I wrote," he says, "to Mr. Farrington, why he should not be offended at my using the Lord's prayer." Even men of sense and piety, in zeal for a particular opinion, may be lamentably deficient in Christian charity.

In Mr. Henry's public services on the Sabbath, the ancient and invaluable custom of expounding the holy Scripture was uniformly practised; and during his residence at Chester, he explained to his congregation more than once, the whole of the sacred oracles. By this means his people were remarkable for their scriptural knowledge.

It contributed to Mr. Henry's ministerial proficiency, that the thoughts which he cherished of the great work to which he was devoted, were just and elevated; and therefore, in some degree at least, proportioned to its magnitude. It was never, through his instrumentality, degraded by any unhallowed associations, either of worldly emolument or mere external respectability, still less of ease and sloth. Keeping the design of the institution continually in view, he magnified his office; and steadily seeking the edification and increase of the church of Christ, he earnestly and perseveringly coveted the best gifts. When reviewing a sacramental opportunity, he says,

"I endeavored to wrestle this day with God in secret and at his table for two things, (and O that I might prevail!) the heart of the upright, and the tongue of the learned." And on another occasion, he said, "I would *excel* in my work."

The sincerity of these, his recorded desires, was happily demonstrated by unremitting preparation for the pulpit. To that leading object every other was subordinate. All he read, and all he saw, as well as the things which he heard, were regarded by him with more or less attention, as they bore upon *that*. Nothing crude or undigested found its way, through his instrumentality, into the solemn assembly.

Upon the Scriptures he bestowed his chief and profoundest attention. He studied his sermons with vast diligence and care, and wrote them at considerable length. Some advices, yet extant, addressed to ministers, well exemplify this part of his character; and, by the absence of any mention of *writing*, they show a happy freedom from dogmatism and intrusiveness, as to his own particular modes. He wisely judged that matters of mere convenience or taste are best left to the discretion and habits of mankind. If sermons were well studied, he did not consider it important whether the process was carried on with a pen or without one; in the closet, or garden, or fields, or elsewhere.

He would say to ministers, "Take heed of growing remiss in your work. Take pains while you live.

Think not that, after a while, you may relax and go over your old stock. The Scriptures still afford new things, to those who search them. Continue searching. How can you expect God's blessing, or your people's observance, if you are careless? Be studious not to offer that which costs nothing. Take pains, that you may find out acceptable words. Let all your performances smell of the lamp. This will engage the attention of your people. *Feed* the church of God which is among you. Feed the ignorant with knowledge, the careless with admonition, the wandering with direction, and the mourning with comfort."

No odd or affected tones, or any violent and unseemly agitations, cast over Mr. Henry's pulpit efforts the least deteriorating shade. Like Bishop Earle's "Grave Divine," he beat upon his text, not upon the cushion. In addition to a fascinating manner, his excursive and vigorous imagination furnished such a fund of ingenious biblical illustration, as to place divine truth in a vivid and striking light, and himself upon the pinnacle of popularity. In his younger years the vehemency of his affections, both in prayer and preaching, was such as frequently melted himself and his auditors into tears. On one occasion he said, "You think we are too earnest with you to leave your sins and accept of Christ; but when you come to die you will see the meaning of it. We see death at your backs."

In subsequent years, if Mr. Henry became more temperate, he did not either chill or freeze. His feelings and earnestness were, perhaps, better regulated, but they were not destroyed. In his diary for September 10, 1699, when in his thirty-eighth year, he thus writes: "I preached of God the chief good, from Psal. 73 : 25, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' I had some enlargement of affections, and I find some prejudice to my bodily strength by my overearnestness, but I cannot help it; for I believe the things I speak to be true and great, and I would be in my work as one in earnest." And this fervent manner of preaching he sustained to the end of life.

He was also remarkable for *variety* in his ministrations. Loving to give Scripture its full latitude, he took a wide range, and studiously presented religious truth in its connections and its tendencies. He ever listened to the "voice which speaketh from heaven"—whether addressed by the visible creation, the beauties of natural scenery, the discoveries of science, the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai, or that overwhelming exhibition of mercy which proclaims to apostate and perishing transgressors the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus"—and thus his views became large and comprehensive.

It was the practice of many "ancient worthies," after having chosen a subject for the pulpit, to pur-

sue it, week after week, from the *same* text. But Mr. Henry preferred employing *different* texts for the discussion of even the same general truth; an improvement well adapted to relieve both preachers and hearers from that wearisomeness which is inseparable from continued iteration.

And, as no other theme can excite devotional ardor so powerfully as a vivid impression of this one grand truth, that Christ was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," it can be no matter of surprise that to Mr. Henry it was most pleasant to be preaching Christ, and that when he was so engaged, to borrow his own phrase, he was "most in his element." Well did he observe, when expatiating upon the subject, that, although "the Scriptures are the circumference of faith, the rounds of which it walks, and every point of which compass it toucheth, yet the centre of it is Christ. *That* is the polar star on which it resteth."

Next to the pattern exhibited at Broad Oak, probably nothing served more to increase his attachment to this style of preaching, or more conduced to his distinction and usefulness in the church, than his intimacy with the Rev. Francis Tallents. The name of Mr. Tallents has already been mentioned; it is well known; and of him it is not too much to affirm, that he was equally eminent for his learning, his wisdom, his moderation, and his piety. To the youthful prophets around him he was a father.

Though far advanced in years, he cultivated their friendship, accurately observed their public performances, discovered a lively interest in their respectability and success, and, mingling with counsels and rebukes the most affectionate kindness, he secured their attention and esteem.

The nature and effects of that intercourse are well evinced in the two following letters, which were both addressed to Mr. Tallents by Mr. Henry. It is not easy to decide upon which party they confer most honor.

"JULY 21, 1694.

"DEAR AND HONORED SIR—I am greatly obliged to you, not only for your very quickening words when I was with you, but for your very quickening lines which you sent after me. I reckon, when I come to Salop, it is, as the old Puritans went to Dedham,* to fetch fire. I desire to bless my God for any influences of grace and comfort which I have often experienced through you, and I am ashamed that the impressions thereof have been no more strong and lasting. I thank you for the hint you give me to speak more of the doctrine of God's election, and free grace, which I shall endeavor to observe. It refresheth me to think that there are any of those whom I am called to speak to in God's name, whom I trust the Lord hath 'loved with an

* Dedham was the residence of the celebrated Rev. John Rogers, the ancestor of some of the earliest Puritan fathers of America.

everlasting love;' and though there are so many who do not believe our report, yet there are some to whom 'the arm of the Lord' shall be more and more 'revealed.' By an effectual choice he hath wonderfully and graciously secured the glory of his Son; the happiness of a remnant of his creatures; and, in subordination to these, the comfort of his poor ministers. In my Master's work I am but of yesterday, yet I find that there is not now that encouraging success which there was at the first opening of the present door of opportunity, which makes me ready to ask sometimes, 'Is the Lord among us, or is he not?' But surely he is, and in more ways than one is doing his own work. I have read with satisfaction what you direct me to in Turretine, and return you many thanks for your hint in that matter. I beg your prayers for me, that the Lord, when I preach, will lead me into the mystery of the riches of free grace for conviction and direction. I endeavor to do it as a means by which free grace usually works its own work; but I desire to wind up all in the glory of God: 'not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory.' I beg the continuance of your prayers, and when you can spare a little time, a line or two from you will be very much a refreshment to your most affectionate and obedient

"Son in the Lord,

"MATTHEW HENRY."

"Broad Oak, Oct. 29, 1695.

"Dear and honored Sir—I desire to be thankful to God for your love to me, and your kind letters. Yours, which I met with here at Broad Oak, hath in it very quickening and refreshing memoranda of our dear Lord Jesus Christ, whom we should think more of, and live more upon, did we remember that he is the *head* of our religion. I have found comfort and satisfaction in preaching some sermons lately, though in much weakness, concerning the mediation of Jesus Christ, 'the new and living Way,' through which we 'enter into the holiest,' and heaven is made familiar to us. I desire that when you put up a petition for me, it may be this—that I may be a true minister of Jesus Christ; not only appointed by him, but affected with his love; acquainted with the mystery of it; and an instrument to bring others acquainted with it, etc., etc. * I rest your obedient son in the common faith.

"Mat. Henry."

In the prosecution of his ministry, Mr. Henry made no attempt to conceal or palliate the guilt and extent of human depravity; nor to disprove or explain away the necessity of divine influence in saving sinners; but, on the contrary, he labored to confirm those fundamental truths, and to lay open the secrets of the heart, in order that his hearers might be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judg-

ment. He then invariably conducted them to Calvary. There he delighted to linger, urging them individually to behold the Lamb of God. And so unanswerably did he press the obligations of sinners to believe, as to leave all who remained obstinate and impenitent without excuse. "I do not stand here," he would say, "to mock you with an uncertainty, or to trifle with you about an indifferent thing; but in the name of Christ, my Master, to make a serious offer to you of life and salvation, upon the terms of faith and repentance."

And upon his brethren in the ministry he urged the pursuit of a similar course. "Let Jesus Christ," said he, "be all in all. Study Christ: preach Christ: live Christ." Both by his advice and example he recommended that uniform regard to simplicity and plainness of speech, which constitutes one of the main excellencies of a public instructor. He would say to his ministerial brethren, "Let your performances be plain and scriptural. Choose for your pulpit subjects the plainest and most needful truths, and endeavor to make them plainer. Be serious in the delivery. Affect not fine words, but words which the Holy Ghost teaches; that is, sound speech which cannot be condemned. Enticing words of man's wisdom debase your matter. Gold needs not to be painted. Scripture expressions are what people are used to, and will remember. Consider the lambs of the flock. You must take *them* along

with you. Do not overdrive them, by being overlong, or overfine."

Some divines have been designated "fugitive," because they run away from their text; but Mr. Henry adhered, with admirable closeness, to the passage which he professed to explain; yet neither pressing into its service foreign or irrelevant truths, and still less far-fetched inventions, nor evading any topic to which he was naturally led. Although, after years of ministerial service, he could say to his assembled congregation, "That which I have *mainly* insisted upon is turning to God, and walking with God;" still, in connection with this solemn appeal, he could also affirm, that he had not shunned to declare unto them the whole counsel of God. Wherever his text directed him, in that path he walked, unshackled by human authority, and fearless of consequences.

When urging his hearers to the performance of Christian duties, he endeavored to furnish the necessary rules and directions in the express words of Scripture. But important truths he often illustrated by scriptural allusions. An instance will be given in his own language. After exposing the nature and evils of carnal security, he thus pointed out its *danger*. "We are in danger by it of having our hair cut; that is, of losing our strength, as Samson when he slept upon Delilah's lap. Security is weakening; it weakens our resistance of temptation, and

our performance of duty. We are in danger by it of having tares sown in our hearts, as they were in the cornfield while men slept. Corruptions prevail and get head while we are secure, and off our watch. We are in danger by it of being robbed of our spear and cruse of water, as Saul was when he slept. When secure we lose our defence, and our comfort, and so lie exposed and disquieted. We are in danger by it of being nailed to the earth, as Sisera was when he slept in Jael's tent: of minding earthly things; of having head and heart fixed to this world. The rich fool was thus nailed to the earth, and he counted upon goods laid up for many years. We can never reach heaven while we are fastened to the earth. We are in danger by it of being given up to sleep, as the disciples were in the garden. 'Sleep on now.' It is a dismal thing to be let alone in carnal security. We are in danger of sinking into destruction. Jonah was, when he slept in the storm. Security has slain its ten thousands, who have gone sleeping to hell. And what is hell, but to lie for ever under the power of that soul-sinking word, 'Depart from me,' with a gulf fixed to cut off all access?"

To render his pulpit addresses the more appropriate, he was frequent in pastoral visits, and took a lively interest in the circumstances of his flock. At an ordination he thus commended the same course to others: "Be familiar with your people; not high,

or strange. Converse with them for their good. Acquaint yourselves with the state of their souls; their temptations, their infirmities. You will then know the better how to preach to them. Your flock being volunteers, you may be the more encouraged in dealing with them, and encourage them to ask you questions about their souls."

In Mr. Henry's spiritual vision nothing appeared to have been either diseased or distorted. He did not merely assert doctrines with oracular authority, but proved them by well-selected and convincing arguments; whilst the duties of genuine Christians were unanswerably enforced, and their privileges and enjoyments illustrated with singular ingenuity and the most captivating eloquence. In every part of the system of revealed truth, he saw the pleasing combination of infinite wisdom with the most unsullied purity. "Some truths," said he, "are plain and easy; others are more deep and mysterious; but *all* are designed to fructify the holy land, and to 'make glad the city of God.' It is but a half Christianity that rests in the acts of devotion; it is not an entire Christianity that is not honest as well as godly. Without this, the profession of religion will be looked upon as a pretence; a seeming religion, which is vain." "Take heed," he would say, "of affecting novelties in religion, lest you fall into vanities, or worse. Ask for the *old* way; keep to the faith once delivered to the saints; keep to

the *proportion* of faith. Take heed to your doctrine—that it jostle not out God's grace, nor man's duty; but take both together."

Governed by principles like these, his sermons were uniformly practical. The morals which he taught, being founded, like those of the New Testament, upon the doctrines which are according to godliness, ever left the purest ethics of heathenism and the most admired dissertations of a fashionable theology at an immeasurable distance. He said, "The very life and soul of religion consists in a conscientious regard to Jesus Christ: *that* Christianizeth morality, and turns moral virtue into evangelical holiness." Instead, therefore, of dealing in useless generalization, his sermons were fashioned after inspired models, and abounded in close and pungent address, directed at once to the understanding and the conscience of every hearer. When advising others, on one occasion, to discriminate in their preaching, that they might neither strengthen the hands of the wicked, nor make the hearts of the righteous sad, he said, "It is a reigning sign of hypocrisy, when the heart cannot endure a searching ministry; when the ministry of the prophets torments," alluding to Rev. 11 : 10.

From an earnest desire to be useful in saving souls, Mr. Henry was induced, at times, to adopt a style of address which was calculated to alarm. Like his venerable father, he could look at his hearers, and

without the fear of contradiction could say, "I love to be the messenger of good tidings; my temper and spirit is to encourage poor sinners to come, and repent." Nevertheless, as a faithful watchman, he felt it his duty to warn men of their danger. "We have no other way," said he, "of delivering our souls, but by telling 'the wicked man' that he shall surely die; that is, be eternally miserable in the world to come. Nor is this legal preaching; for Christ so preached very often. The Scriptures which speak of hell are to be mostly found in the New Testament. 'He that believeth not, shall be damned,' is part of the *Gospel* which we are commissioned to preach."

But Mr. Henry's fidelity to the impenitent did not induce him to slight the claims of believers. On the contrary, he delighted to minister to their comfort. To them he unfolded the "precious promises," and exhibited the glorious "recompense of reward." He reminded them that "spiritual life is eternal life begun; that present light and love are the beginnings of eternal light and love; that the citizenship of the saints is now in heaven; that although as yet grace be like the smoking flax, yet there is a spark, and it will shortly blow up into a flame." "Duty and comfort," he sometimes remarked, "go abreast; neither are to be neglected. Many are willing to separate them. They love, with Ephraim, to tread out the corn; but not, with Ju-

dah, to plough, and, with Jacob, to break the clods. They love to hear of comforts, those are smooth things; but not to hear of duty. What, however, God has joined, let us not think to separate. Those who would reap in glory, must sow in duty. Justification is to be tried by sanctification. They are evermore concomitants."

Mr. Henry considered the improvement of providential occurrences, whether merciful or afflictive, whether general or local, as essential to making "full proof of his ministry." He therefore frequently preached sermons of a miscellaneous character, adapted to the young, the seasons of the year, and the various exercises of mourning and joy, which, to a vigilant pastor, present some of the finest opportunities of effective ministration. He observed, "The command to be 'instant in season and out of season,' is charged with great solemnity. And is it not *in season* when persons are in affliction? An interpreter will then be one of a thousand."

The redeeming of time, especially for religious exercises, formed a distinguished feature of ancient non-conformity; and most of the non-conformist ministers turned this to good account. Amongst the rest, Mr. Henry maintained a weekly lecture on Thursday, which was attended, usually, by no inconsiderable part of his congregation. "It is the will of God," he said, "that we should be diligent in our business *all* the days of the week, according as the duty of

every day requires; but it is a corrupt and profane inference, that therefore we are not, on those days, to pray in our families, or hear sermons. In the six days we must do all our *work*. And is not serving God, and working out our salvation, *part* of our business? Have we not souls to work for, as well as bodies? As God must have his day out of every week, so he must have his hour out of every day. There is, as we may see in the 145th Psalm, a song not only for the Sabbath-day, but for every day. We should spend as much for our souls in the week-days, as for our bodies on the Sabbath."

The attention paid by Mr. Henry to the rising generation was exemplary, constant, and attractive. For his own excitement, and also for the guidance of others, he not unfrequently observed, that Peter was charged to feed the lambs, as well as the sheep. In addition to sermons often expressly preached to the young, the work of catechizing was indefatigably performed every Saturday afternoon. The exercise commenced and ended with prayer. It usually occupied more than an hour, and was attended not only by the catechumens, but by others also, who, fondly anticipating the holy rest of the Sabbath on the morrow, esteemed the service a suitable preparation for the sacred duties of the sanctuary. When any of those young persons of whom he had entertained hope grew vain and careless, he deeply lamented their state; and ceased not to pray to God

that he would recover them out of the snare of the devil, before their hearts were hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. But in this labor of love for the young, it was Mr. Henry's happiness and honor to be remarkably successful, as well as persevering.

His attention to discipline in the church combined spiritual wisdom with holy zeal, and was equally remote from precipitation and supineness. Without trespassing either upon faithfulness or tenderness, he could adopt the apostle's spirit-stirring appeal: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" When evil reports concerning any of his flock needed attention, he inquired diligently into the facts; he weighed every complaint and every plea; and if the statement was proved, reproof was fully administered, but with the utmost affection. His object was not to indulge any angry feeling, but to reclaim the offender. Such he invariably endeavored to restore "in the spirit of meekness," according to the apostolic exhortation.

The sick and afflicted were special objects of his attention, whatever might be their external circumstances or their ecclesiastical connections, provided that in this last particular he should not be intrenching upon the duty of any other minister, for he never attempted to build upon another man's foundation. Nothing short of invincible necessity prevented his attendance whenever his services were called for. Nor did he wait for applications to be made for those

services. By inquiring among his friends, he sought out the afflicted; and when his prayers in the congregation were anonymously desired, he would publicly request the writers to furnish their names, not only that he might remember them in prayer more appropriately, but that he might know how to render them other service also. In his diary he is almost daily to be traced, when at home, to the chambers of the sick and distressed, the Sabbath not excepted; sometimes he visited four or five in a day; the names are commonly recorded, and brief mention is made both of their state and frame of mind. The event was not overlooked. If they recovered, he not only blessed God on their behalf, but, by apt exhortations, reminded them of the vows and resolutions which they had made, and urged to the performance of them.

Thus faithfully did this devoted servant of Christ labor in the ancient city of Chester, for nearly a quarter of a century. Nor were his labors confined within the walls of the city. He frequently visited the surrounding villages and the more distant towns of the county, and indeed often extended his labors to the counties of Lancashire, Staffordshire, and portions of the principality of Wales. Like all other ministers of the same glorious Gospel which he preached, he had many discouragements in his work; but, generally, he was privileged to behold the work of the Lord prospering.

As he was frequently called upon to assist at the solemnity of ordaining his younger brethren to the work and office of the ministry, the next chapter will be devoted to the record of some of the counsels which, on those occasions, he offered to those who were invested through his instrumentality with the sacred office.

CHAPTER X.

Exhortations delivered by Mr. Henry to ministers at their ordination to the sacred office.

The ordination of a minister is a solemn and momentous affair. Mr. Henry felt it to be such, both in his own case and that of others. The following gleanings from exhortations which he delivered at different times on such occasions, will serve increasingly to illustrate his own habits of pastoral vigilance and labor. They will display, also, with additional clearness, the exalted pleasure which he felt in the good work. And while they may serve to lead some candidates for the sacred office to pause before they assume its responsibilities, they may, at the same time, encourage others to put their hand

to the gospel plough; and edify and delight all who in sincerity and in truth love the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole Head of the Church.

"We must not," said he, "be forward to put forth ourselves in the exercise of spiritual gifts. Pride often appears in this under a pretence of a desire to be useful. If the motive be correct, it is good; but humility will wait for a call."

"The charge we have now to give unto you who are sworn on the grand inquest between our Sovereign Lord, the King of kings, and his church on earth, is not a light thing, for it is your life. You are intrusted with the 'charge of the sanctuary.' Keep the charge, though you be called, as those of old, to war a warfare in it.

"It is a divine charge. We have not the cutting out of your work. We are only to tell you what it is. Your charge you receive from the hand that gives you your commission, and puts you into the ministry, even Christ, whose ministers and stewards you are. *He* commanded the twelve, and the circumstance is noticed, both by Matthew and Luke; the one in his Gospel, and the other in the Acts of the Apostles. From him you are to expect the blessing, and strength to fulfil your trust.

"It is a charge solemn enough to strike the lightest mind with awe. See with what solemnity Paul, again and again, addressed Timothy, though a man of a serious spirit. 1 Tim. 5 : 21; 1 Tim. 6 : 13; 2

Tim. 4 : 1, 2. God's eye is upon you, and the eye of Christ, and the holy angels; therefore it is that you receive the charge in public, and before the church.

"It is a charge that requires for the fulfilling of it the whole man—'all that is within you.' If a man had ten souls, the ministry is work enough for them all. Therefore the charge of the sanctuary was committed to men in the prime of their time, between the ages of twenty-five and fifty.

"It is a charge for life; while God gives you ability and opportunity. You are laying your hand to a 'plough,' from which there is no looking back. It is a charge from which you must not think of being *discharged* till your life end. In case of sickness or restraint, 'God will have mercy and not sacrifice.'

"It is a charge upon which you will, in the great day, be called to an account. Ministers must be *judged*. Your office, if you profane the holy things of God, will not excuse you. Remember Nadab and Abihu; the day after they were consecrated, they were consumed.

"You must faithfully explain and apply the oracles of God. You have a Gospel to *preach*, not to make. You must faithfully administer the ordinances of Christ. You must maintain the truths of the Gospel. You must preside in religious assemblies. You must witness against sin. You must separate

between the precious and the vile. You must comfort afflicted consciences. You must intercede for the church and people of God. You must transmit that which is committed to you to the rising generation.

"In particular, we give you charge concerning the CARE OF YOUR SOULS. 'Take heed' to *thyself*, to save thyself in the first place.

"Make sure your own interest in Christ, and a work of grace in your hearts. See that the good work be wrought and going on there. Raise your applications from *thence*, that you may speak feelingly and experimentally. Such a thing affected *me*. Press those methods you yourselves have found the benefit of. Be not as Noah's workmen, who built an ark for others, and perished themselves; or as mercurial posts, which direct others, but themselves stand still. Your work will be a task and a burden to you, if you do not *relish* divine things; and in that case you cannot expect God's blessing.

"Keep up communion with God, both in secret and in public. Be affected yourselves with what you speak to others. God gives his prophets leave to be free with him. Use your freedom. Let us not be strangers to our Master. It is our privilege that we are often called to prayer. Let us, like the apostle Paul, keep a conscience void of offence. How else can we expect God's presence, and strength, and blessing? We profess to be tender, and we

condescend, in some things, to justify that tenderness. Let it be so in *every* thing. If we walk not in God's counsels, how can we expect to profit his people? Take heed of sin. You spoil your ministry if you suffer that worm to be at the root. Set your eye upon God's eye, and believe that his is upon yours.

"Keep up an intimacy with your own hearts. Be much in communing with them. Keep your own vineyards; else how can you keep others'? Make that clear to yourselves, which you would make clear to others; and be affected with that yourselves with which you would affect others. Look well to your principles and aims; let your eye be single. Take heed of pride; it will spoil all. There is no greater ornament to a young minister than humility. Say, with the psalmist, 'I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.'

"Take heed of spiritual pride. This is spoken of, in an address to Timothy, as the temptation of young ministers. Think not that you have already attained; but forget the things that are behind. Magnify your office, but do not magnify yourselves. It is not outward honor that we must aim at. Let evil report help to lay us low, and let not good report help to lift us up. Boasting is for ever excluded. 'For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not *receive?* Now, if

thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?' Pray much against this sin; pray for 'grace sufficient.'

"We give you charge concerning the COURSE OF YOUR CONVERSATION. If your lives do not correspond with your preaching, you pull down with one hand what you build up with the other. See to it that, in your conversation, you preserve the credit of your ministry. We charge you with this, because the glory and honor of God is concerned in it, which will suffer if you miscarry. 'Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that teachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through the breaking of the law dishonorest thou God?'

"Keep at a distance from all evil, all appearance of it. Many eyes are upon you. Let your conversation be grave, sober, pure. Ministers should be mortified men. Cherish not desires after worldly riches and delights; but 'follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, patience, meekness. Flee also youthful lusts.'

"Take heed of the indulgence of the flesh. Paul reminds himself of it. 'I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection; lest by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-

away.' Take it not ill that I remind you of it. Prophets are spiritual men; but 'the prophet is a fool, and the spiritual man is mad,' if he submit to the dominion of carnal lusts. Be sober in the use of creature comforts. That liberty which may be decent in another, may be culpable in a minister. He that ruleth not himself, how shall *he* rule the church?

"Take heed of worldliness. The love of money is a root of more evil in a minister than in any other person. Regard not your stuff if the heavenly Canaan be yours. Let them that know no better take their portion in these things; but you may not.

"Promote the ends of your ministry. Preach in your lives. Use good discourse. It will be expected from you, and better taken than from others. Be *examples* to believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Let it be seen that you believe what you report of the evil of sin. Men will do as you *do* sooner than as you say. Make your converse edifying, that every company you come into may be the better for you. Your profession is an honor to you; be not you a disgrace to it.

"'Be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' These two must go together. Act with prudence; not 'fleshly wisdom,' but that which is by the grace of God. It will be your prudence to meddle as little as may be in secular affairs; not to entangle

yourselves in the affairs of this life. 'Who made me a judge or divider?' Also take heed of what you say to other people. There is a time when the prudent shall keep silence. With this, innocency, a dovelike spirit without gall, will well become you. If others are any way injurious, do not meditate revenge; for this is *not* dovelike. Your business is to do good to all; therefore, your care must be to do hurt to none.

"Give no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed; get and keep a good name: avoid every appearance of evil. The most circumspect cannot escape censure, but you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Let it never be said of us, that we are proud and haughty, that we are vain and frothy, that we are covetous or worldly. Deny yourselves in many things which otherwise are lawful, that you may save the credit of your ministry. If *that* be blamed, we are blamed who have set you apart to it. You have many eyes upon you, and some that watch for your halting, therefore walk accurately.

"Show yourselves patterns of good works. Christ began to do and to teach; and so must you. Your voice is Jacob's; let your hand be his also. You would have others to be serious and humble: be you so. You must put others in mind, as directed, to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work; to be

no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. Set them an example, then; let no man despise your youth. Though you are young in age, you are elders in office: it becomes you, therefore, to be serious and grave. If any variance happens, be patterns of peace-making, yielding to others, and bearing with them. Be examples of peaceableness. You will hardly reconcile those to Christ whom you cannot reconcile to yourselves. Win all by love and meekness.

"We give you charge concerning THE WELFARE OF THE CHURCH IN GENERAL. You are the messengers of the churches, as well as the glory of Christ. Be *serviceable* to the church. Take all occasions for the pulpit. Make it appear that your work is a delight, and not a drudgery. Instruct and exhort in personal converse; never reckon it out of season. Fail not to visit the sick. Be instant in visiting those also who are in health. Wherever you come, leave a good word behind you.

"You are watchmen upon the walls. 'Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.' Be intercessors for the *church*. Prophets of old prayed for the public peace. Stand in the gap, as did Moses—who should, if you do not? Acquaint yourselves with the state of the churches, that you may be particular herein. Seeing you are not *obliged* to forms, you have the more

need to furnish yourselves for every good word and work. Let not that liberty be turned into licentiousness. Improve in your praying gifts; offer not any thing unbecoming the seriousness of that ordinance. Use Scripture expressions. They are most unexceptionable, and most agreeable to those who are serious. Pray for the *spirit* of prayer.

"We are in Christ's kingdom, appointed to be conservators of the peace. Charge the peace then in Christ's name. Condemn not those who differ from you. Be not censorious. Widen not your differences. Judge charitably of all. Praise that which is good; and make the best of what you dislike. Let us be offensive to none, but obliging to all. Let not the Gospel of peace be *preached* contentiously.

"We charge you concerning THE WELFARE OF THOSE CONGREGATIONS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY COMMITTED TO YOU. They must, in a special manner, be your care. You are their choice; you are not thrust upon them; and therefore you have, in some respects, a greater advantage in dealing with them. 'Take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers: to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.' Feed the flock of God. You must do this in your familiar applications; and especially when they apply to you. Be familiar with them, not shy and haughty. Show yourselves glad of an

occasion to talk with them about their souls. Be so well furnished that you need not fear betraying a weak side. Be so humble as not to think it a disparagement to converse with the meanest saint, but rather a disparagement to be in company with the haughtiest sinner. And be *faithful* to them. Tell them with meekness of their faults.

"We charge you by way of COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT. You must expect to meet with difficulties—from the oppositions of Satan, from the frowns of the world. You must expect reproach and contempt. It is our present trial. You may be tempted to think all this had been prevented if you had been of some other employment. You see little success of your ministry, and that is a discouragement. You labor in vain, and are ready to faint. But the greatest discouragement is from *within;* our own weakness. We do not (say you) profit *ourselves;* we fear *we* shall not hold out. Be not discouraged. Let your weakness and infirmities humble you, but not dishearten you; for God's grace is sufficient. When you are weak in yourselves, if sensible of your weakness, and relying on Christ, you shall find yourselves strong. Encourage yourselves to use means for your improvement. God's blessing can do wonders by weak endeavors.

"Be not discouraged by the reproaches and injuries you may meet with. You set out with the wind in your faces, and, perhaps, may hear of hard

things said of you; but let none of these things move you. You are not to stand or fall by *men's* judgment: approve yourselves to God, and you may be easy. The smiles of our Father will balance the anger of our mother's children; and his 'well done,' all their unkind censures. Nor be discouraged by the little success of your ministry. It is the case that we are disappointed as to many, and as to some whom we have taken pains with, of whom we have said, These 'shall comfort us concerning our work, and the toil of our hands.' But our recompense will be according to our faithfulness, not our success. 'Though Israel be not gathered, yet,' said Isaiah, 'shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.' It may be it is our own fault. 'If,' said the Lord by Jeremiah, 'if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.' Remember, you are employed in work in which God is working *with* you. We serve a Master who, if we be faithful to him, makes the *best* of us, and is not 'extreme to mark' what we do amiss. You have many encouraging examples before you. Great will be your reward in *heaven*, if you are faithful. The souls you win, the sufferings you bear, will be your crown.

"There are, however, several other things to encourage us. The goodness of our work. We are

despised; but our *work* is not despicable. It is work for Christ and the souls of men. It is a work that will be successful, though we see not, and feel not, the success we desire. Can we ever employ ourselves better than in that which is the proper business of our office?

"Consider the kindness of our Master. He accepts of our sincere endeavors. He has promised to own us, to be with us to the end of the world; to be with each rising generation.

"Remember the promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities; to assist us in our work, and to make it successful. The promise of the Spirit relates especially to ministers. See John's Gospel, chapters 14 and 16. Believe the experience of your predecessors; they have found God *all-sufficient* to them. We do not repent laying *our* hand to this plough.

"And then, there is the prospect of the recompense. Bear contempt. If you be faithful, there is honor before you; yea, the best preferment. Let us keep heaven in our eye. Be encouraged in the difficulties of your work: heaven will make amends for all. If your encouragement be but small in *success*, the recompense of the reward is certain.

"Let us then keep *doing*. You have constant work, either to fish, or to mend your nets: like housekeepers, either to bring into your treasuries, or to bring out. Fill up your time. Ministers'

time especially, should be precious. Gather as you spend. Let us love our studies. 'Give attendance to reading.'

"Let me say something to *quicken* you; and this give me leave to transfer to myself, for I need it. Let me consider that the things I am employed about are of vast importance: dealing for an eternal God with immortal souls, about their everlasting state. My Master's eye is always upon me; my time is very precious, and my day hastening to a period. I have a great opportunity of doing good if I be faithful, of serving Christ, of being a worker together with God, of saving souls from death. I must shortly give account, either with joy or grief, according as I am, or am not faithful.

"Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. See that you have true grace yourselves, and then that you be stronger and stronger. Let all your strength be in the grace of Christ. Derive from him daily; depend always upon him. Walk up and down in his name. Without this, 'the youths will be faint and be weary.' When you study or preach, go in the strength of Christ.

"And hold fast till Christ comes. This was all the burden laid upon the presbyters of Thyatira. Christ comes to own you, and crown you. Persevere to the end, that you lose not that crown. I hope you are satisfied in what you have done here to-day. Do not undo it again, but hold it fast."

What minister of religion, who desires to be approved of his Redeemer and Lord, whether he be a tyro or a veteran in the work, may not be instructed and benefited by the appropriate, weighty counsels contained in this chapter?

CHAPTER XI.

Commencement of his labors at Hackney—His indefatigable exertions—Anniversary reflections—Attention to the young—His patronage of charity-schools—His declining health—Visits Chester—Is laid aside by sickness—Relapses again—Birthday memorial—Devout commencement of the last year of his life—Journey to Chester—His last Sabbaths on earth—Sets out for London—Sickness on the road—His death—Funeral—Funeral sermons.

The pastoral engagements of Mr. Henry at Hackney were commenced on Lord's day, May 18, 1712. In the morning he expounded the first chapter of Genesis, and in the afternoon the first chapter of Matthew, thus beginning the world, or rather the ministerial office, as it were, anew. He preached to an encouraging auditory from Acts 16 : 9, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us;" but his mind was unhappy and depressed. "O that good may be done," is the aspiration written at the time; to

which he adds, "I am sad in spirit, lamenting my departure from my friends at Chester; but if they are well provided for, and the work of God go on among them, I shall be easy, whatever discouragements I meet with."

The same course of zealous and active exertion which has been already described, was pursued in his new sphere of labor, both within and beyond the bounds of his own congregation. But while the number and responsibilities of Mr. Henry's engagements were increased, those habits of personal piety and self-dedication which have been so fully exhibited were still continued, and continued in the same spirit of scriptural and elevated devotion. This will be clearly seen by a few further extracts from his journal.

"October 18, 1712. To-day I have filled up, or rather the Lord has filled up unto me, the fiftieth year of my life, and I now enter on old age—with so many years has the divine forbearance indulged me, who, by reason of my sins, am heir to death—nor has God only given life, but he has enriched it with all good things pertaining both to life and godliness: for ever blessed be his name. But what have I done more than others for the glory of God, and the good of the church? I have, indeed, lived an idle, slothful, inactive, and useless life. Have mercy on me, O Lord, and let what remains of my life be entirely devoted to my Redeemer; and when

no more shall remain, let this life be sweetly changed for the life everlasting."

JANUARY 1, 1713, he writes, "Firmly believing that my times are in God's hand, I here submit myself, and all my affairs, for the ensuing year, to the wise and gracious disposal of the divine Providence; whether God appoint for me health or sickness, peace or trouble, comforts or crosses, life or death, his holy will be done.

"Believing that my heart is in God's hand, this precious soul of mine I commit to the conduct of the divine grace, and submit to the influences and operations of the blessed Spirit, to be wrought up to a conformity to the will of God in every thing. I depend upon God to give me a wise and understanding heart for all the services I may be called out unto, and from him I hope to obtain mercy to be found faithful.

"The sphere of my usefulness is much enlarged. O that my heart may be proportionably enlarged; and as the day is, so let the wisdom, and strength, and grace be. Temptations to spiritual pride are many. O that the grace of God may be sufficient for me, to keep me humble, very humble; to keep up in me always a humble sense of my own unworthiness, weakness, and many follies and infirmities; and a humble dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ, as all in all, both for righteousness and strength."

At Hackney, as at Chester, the *young* shared largely in Mr. Henry's attention. Catechizing had never been wholly omitted in and about London, but he was instrumental in a more general revival of it. Besides attending to that duty at Hackney on Saturdays, which he commenced performing almost immediately after his settlement there, he undertook a catechetical lecture in London, at the meeting-house which once belonged to his honored preceptor, Mr. Doolittle. And that lecture was not only well attended, but some young persons were known to Mr. Tong, who, going only as spectators, ascribed their first religious impressions to the instructions then received.

"His papers abound with proofs of the intense interest which he took, both in their temporal and spiritual welfare. Nor was his care for them confined to the families of the opulent; it extended equally to the children of the poor. One of his minutes in his journal is the following: "January 1, 1712–13, I went early to Gravel-lane, in Southwark, Mr. Marriot's meeting-place, where there has been a charity-school for twenty-five years; the only one among the dissenters; there I preached an anniversary sermon on Proverbs 3 : 9, 'Honor the Lord with thy substance.' A collection was made amounting to about £35."

But whilst employed in indefatigable labors, the time of his departure drew near. He was about to

receive the reward of the faithful servant, whom his Lord when he cometh finds "watching" and working. "His motion in holiness and service was the swifter as he came nearer to the centre of his rest." He did not long survive his removal to Hackney; but his descent to the grave, though at last sudden, was gradual. His frame had been severely tried by the attacks which have been already noticed; and during the last two years of his life, their frequency and violence increased. They visibly indicated a yielding constitution, and so attracted his own notice, as to occasion frequent allusion to the probable issue; but with enviable composure, if not delight.

Before he left Chester, he engaged, while able, to visit that city annually, for a few Sabbaths. This arrangement, suggested by the congregation at Hackney, the better to secure his acceptance of their invitation, was most scrupulously observed. His own account will best furnish the detail, and is too interesting to be omitted.

"July 20, 1713. I am now set out in the coach for Chester, to visit my friends in the country, as I proposed and promised when I came hither, aiming at God's glory, and the edification of souls.

"On the 23rd we came to Whitchurch; many of my friends met me there, to my great reviving. In the afternoon I went and preached at Broad Oak, from Romans 1 : 11, 'For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end

ye may be established.' The next day I went to Chester, where my friends received me with much affection and respect, so that I could not but say it was worth the while to come. On the Lord's day I preached from 1 Tim. 6 : 12, 'Lay hold on eternal life.' It was very pleasant to me to preach in the old place, where I have often met with God and been owned by him. On Wednesday we kept a congregational fast; the next Lord's day I preached, and administered the Lord's supper to my beloved flock; a great congregation. On Monday I went to Middlewich, preached a lecture there from Matthew 24 : 12, 'Iniquity abounds.' The next day to Knutsford, to a meeting of ministers. I preached from Col. 2 : 8, 'Though absent in the flesh, yet present in the spirit:' about the spiritual communion of saints.

"On Lord's day, August 9, I preached at Chester, from Titus 2 : 13, 'Looking for the blessed hope.' I took an affectionate farewell of many of my friends, and prayed with many of them; the next day set out from Chester, with much ado, for Nantwich, where Mr. Mottershed is well settled. I preached from Joshua 1 : 5, 6, 'As I was with Moses, I will be with thee; be strong and of a good courage.' From thence that night to Wrenbury Wood, and preached there from John 1 : 48; and from thence to Danford, and preached at Whitchurch, from 1 Peter, 5 : 10, and took my leave of

my dear friends there. I went into the coach alone; came to London the 15th, and found my tabernacle in peace."

Shortly after his return home, symptoms of diabetes manifested themselves, and he was laid aside for one Sabbath. "A melancholy day," he writes, "yet not without some sweet communion with God. It is just upon me for an inordinate desire to be at my study and work again." Still feeling the effects of the shock, he says, soon after, "I cannot now rise so early, nor stick so close to my study, as I could before my last illness. The Lord perfect strength in me."

During the following month his already shattered system sustained another violent nephritical attack. It was the Sabbath when he was seized with it; but he officiated as usual, and toiled incessantly during the ensuing week. On Tuesday he went to London to his catechizing. On Wednesday he delivered the lecture at Hackney, and attended the funeral of his neighbor, Mr. Ironmonger, who was buried at Stepney. On Thursday evening he preached at Spitalfields. On Friday he joined in a fast, and gave the sermon at Mr. Fleming's, at Founder's hall. On Saturday he found himself well.

Another birthday anniversary having arrived, it was noticed in the following tender and expressive terms. "October 18, 1713. The fifty-first year of my life has this day closed. In the course of it

many of my friends have reached their goal. I am yet alive, but in the midst of death. May my soul be fitted for the heavenly life, and then—the will of the Lord be done."

The interval of convalescence was short. In reference to his frequent attacks of sickness about this time, he affectingly noticed the alternations of ease and pain. In any circumstances such notices would be valuable; but they are rendered doubly so, from the speedy and sudden termination of his earthly pilgrimage.

"LORD'S DAY, Dec. 13. This morning, a little after midnight, I was seized with a fit of the stone; but, blessed be God, the pain in about an hour went off: though fatigued with it, yet the poor body was fitted in some measure to serve the Lord. I went to London, and preached the morning lecture at Mr. Robinson's, from John 20 : 1, 'The first day of the week, early, while it was yet dark.' I preached at Hackney, from Romans 2 : 8, 9.

"THURSDAY, Dec. 17. I went to my study early in the morning; but before seven o'clock, I was seized with a fit of the stone, which held me all day pained and sick. I lay much on the bed. I had comfort in lifting up my heart to God, and pleading his promises, and encouraged myself in *him*. About nine o'clock in the evening I had much ease, but was weak.

"FRIDAY, Dec. 18. I am very well to-day, though

very ill yesterday. How is this life counter-changed! Yet I am but girding on the harness. The Lord prepare me for the next fit, and for the last."

It was an observation of Mr. Henry's, that "The more we have of the foretastes of heaven, the less evil we shall see in death; which," said he, "is not a bar, but a bridge, in our way to glory." And now, standing upon the threshold of another year, and as if conscious that it was to be his last, he looked the king of terrors steadily in the face; and through faith in Him who hath overcome death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, he triumphed.

"JANUARY 1, 1714. Reflecting with thankfulness upon the many mercies of the past year; a good measure of health; health in my family; encouragement in my ministry, both in the congregation here,* and at London; the comforts of my journey to Chester; the happy settlement of the congregation there; the continuance of the public tranquillity; and, I trust, through grace, some sweet communion with God in his ordinances, and some progress heavenwards, and my work pleasant to me:

"Reflecting with sorrow and shame upon my manifold defects, and short-comings in holy duties; and at other times inward impressions not always

* Hackney is one of the suburbs of London, a few miles from the centre of the city.

answering to outward expressions; having begged for pardon in the blood of Christ:

"I this morning renewed the dedication of myself to God; my own self, my whole self, body, soul, and spirit. Father, I give thee my heart; use me for thy glory this year; employ me in thy service; fit me for thy will. If it should be a year of sickness and pain; if a year of family affliction; if a year of public trouble; if of silencing and suffering, bonds and banishment;* if it be my dying year, *welcome the holy will of God:* if a year of continued health, peace, and liberty, Lord, I desire to be busy in the improvement of it, both in study and preaching, in an entire dependence upon divine grace, without which I am nothing, and can do nothing."

On this new-year's day, the last of his life, he preached a sermon to young people, from Proverbs 23 : 26, "My son, give me thy heart." To the record of this in his diary, the following devout aspiration was added: "Lord, take *my* heart, and make it such as it should be."

On Monday, the 31st of May, Mr. Henry set out on his annual journey to visit his friends at Ches-

* How little can those of the present generation, either in England or America, enter into the feelings of our Puritan forefathers, who labored and struggled for the happy religious liberty which we now enjoy—sitting "under our own vine and fig-tree;" and none daring to make us afraid! "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name" do we give the "glory."

ter and the surrounding country. His labors were abundant. He visited Wrexham, Knutsford, and Chowbent; testifying everywhere "the Gospel of the grace of God." A remark which he made during this visit, shows more satisfaction than he had before felt, in his removal to Hackney. It was this: "I am here [at Chester] among my old friends, yet I find my new ones lie very near my heart, among whom God has now cut out my work."

It is worthy of remark, that the two last Sabbaths which Mr. Henry spent on earth, were employed in the immediate and public contemplation of that sabbatism of rest, upon which he was so soon to enter. On one of those days he preached from Hebrews 4 : 9, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest for the people of God;" and on the other, from the first verse of the same chapter, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering unto his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

The day following the delivery of the last of these discourses, Mr. Henry commenced his journey on his return towards Hackney. He was observed to be heavy and sleepy, but his uniform answer to inquiries was, "Well." It was, however, remarked by a medical friend before he left Chester, that they should never see him again.

Passing by Dudden he drank a glass of the mineral waters. Before he reached Tarporley, his horse

threw him; but he denied that the fall occasioned him any inconvenience. All invitations to tarry there he resisted, and *would* proceed to Nantwich, where he had engaged to preach. His text was Jer. 31 : 18 : "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." The absence of his usual liveliness was universally noticed.

His old and intimate friend Mr. Illidge, who was with him, had been desired by Sir Thomas Delves and his lady, to invite him to Doddington, a house famed for piety. He accepted the invitation, and the steward waited to conduct him thither. But he soon became unable to go on, and at the residence of the Rev. Joseph Mottershed, he was obliged to retire to bed. He requested his friends to pray for him; "for now," said he, "I cannot pray for myself." He spoke of the excellency of spiritual comforts in a time of need, and blessed God for the enjoyment of them. To Mr. Illidge, who was accustomed to notice the sayings of dying men, he had remarked in London the preceding month, that this was his: "A life spent in the service of God, and communion with him, is the most comfortable life any one can live in this world."

The next morning, Tuesday, June 22, about five o'clock, he was seized with apoplexy; and, after

lying three hours speechless, with his eyes fixed, "he fell asleep." Thus was the faithful servant released from all further labor on earth, and admitted to the plenitude of a gracious reward in heaven.

In vain our fancy strives to paint
The moment after death,
The glories that surround the saint,
When he resigns his breath.

One gentle sigh his fetters breaks;
We scarce can say, "He's gone,"
Before the willing spirit takes
Her station near the throne.

Faith strives, but all its efforts fail
To trace her heavenward flight;
No eye can pierce within the veil
Which hides that world of light.

Thus much—and this is all—we know,
They are supremely blest;
Have done with sin, and care, and woe,
And with their Saviour rest.

On harps of gold his name they praise,
His presence always view;
And if we *here* their footsteps trace,
There *we* shall praise him too.

The body was interred in Trinity church, Chester. On the day of the funeral, and on the following Sabbath morning, Mr. Withington, the assistant minister, improved the event in the meeting-house where Mr. Henry had so long held forth the word

of life; and on the afternoon of the Sabbath, Mr. Gardner, the pastor, preached from 2 Kings, 2 : 12, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

The news of Mr. Henry's death, on reaching the metropolis, awakened inexpressible sorrow. The voice of lamentation was heard from different pulpits in every direction. Two sermons were addressed to the Hackney congregation upon the occasion of the pastor's death; one by the Rev. Dr. D. Williams, and the other by the Rev. Mr. Tong. These sermons, which were both published, were admirably calculated to perfume the name of the deceased, to console surviving mourners, to gratify descendants, and to instruct and edify the church.

CHAPTER XII.

His domestic habits—Parental tenderness—Family worship—His friendships—His diligence and improvement of time—His Christian love—Hatred of censoriousness—His candor and moderation—His prudence and benevolence—His humility, and dependence on divine assistance—His submission under trials—His piety towards God and devotional habits, the basis of his character and attainments—His views of the Sabbath, and counsels concerning its sanctification.

The present chapter will be employed in briefly delineating Mr. Henry's private character and his

Christian virtues. In every sense of the phrase, he was a domestic man; studiously contributing to the happiness of his household. Instead of going abroad for enjoyment, he sought and found it in his own habitation. When recording a journey to a distance to preach, he says, "In the evening I came to Chester late, and through much rain; but it was home."

His diary everywhere abounds with evidences of paternal tenderness. The following passage, occasioned by an unfavorable appearance of the measles in one of his children, in which a contest between devout submission and natural affection is very apparent, may serve as a specimen. "I desire to give him (Philip) up to my heavenly Father, yet praying, Father, spare my son, my only son, whom I love."

His whole conduct towards his offspring was marked by kindness. The advice which he gave to others, he acted upon himself. To parents he used to say, "Do all you can to make your children love home." "Continued chiding and finding fault," he abhorred. "Remember," he would say, "that children are *but* children. If parents would not correct them except in a praying frame, when they can 'lift their hands without wrath,' it would neither provoke God nor them."

His care and anxiety for the spiritual interests of his children were uniformly conspicuous. He beheld them with deep and serious attention; sometimes

observing, that it is an awful consideration that when a child is born he will outlive all the ages of time.

In the education of his own children, he copied the example which had been exhibited at Broad Oak; an example in which it would be difficult to determine whether the wisdom of the discipline, or the sanctity of the instruction, most predominated.

Mr. Henry also reverently imitated the constancy and punctuality of his father in attending to domestic worship. Whatever happened, and whoever was under his roof, he assembled his family, both in the morning and evening, as early as circumstances would admit; often saying, he should be "ashamed to put God off with drowsy devotions."

In conducting family worship, he was comprehensive; equally avoiding tediousness and haste. The exercise commenced by a few words of invocation, in which aid and acceptance were implored. Then, in the morning, a portion of the Old Testament Scripture, in regular course, was read; and, in the evening, with like regularity, a portion of the New. Unless the chapter was short, it was divided into sections, of which a brief and edifying explanation was given.

After the exposition some part of a psalm was sung: every one had a book; and so neither the sense nor the melody was interrupted by reading line by line. "How the houses of the good old Protestants were perfumed with this incense daily,

especially on Lord's days, we," says Mr. Henry, "have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us." And he did what he could to perpetuate this pleasant state of things.

Prayer succeeded singing. The whole service was usually comprehended within the space of half an hour, or a little more.

When prayer was over, his children received his blessing, which he pronounced with great seriousness, solemnity, and affection.

On the Sabbath the same order was observed at family worship as on the ordinary days of the week; his public engagements not being allowed to interfere either with the observance itself, or with his own personal attention to it.

In the choice of his associates, and indeed in all his intercourse with society, Mr. Henry manifested the caution which had been instilled into him from infancy, and which he habitually recommended to others. "Those who profess religion, profess friendship to *God:* and is it not," he would say, "a contradiction to that profession, for us to make those our bosom-friends whom he 'beholds afar off?' To the evil-doers, we *must* say, Depart. Not as if it were unlawful to have ordinary commerce with the worst of men. Then must we needs 'go out of the world.' We cannot but have dealings with them; we must pay civil respects to them; but we must not choose and court them for our acquaintance.

Especially, take heed of choosing and courting such into near and standing relations. He that goes near the fire, is in danger; but he who takes fire into his bosom, and goes upon hot coals, is a madman." His rule as to friendship and acquaintance was, "few and good."

Mr. Henry was a steady, sympathizing, and active friend. He used to set apart some time to pray for his relations and friends by name. He also paid them frequent visits. He addressed them by kind letters; and he took pleasure, as opportunity served, in their company at his own house, where he entertained them with cheerfulness. It was in such circumstances that he observed, "God gives us leave to be cheerful; we have cause to be so; and are commanded to be so."

Yet he was an enemy to trifling and levity; and never, for a moment, confounded happiness with those propensities. "True joy," said he, "is a serious thing; and that joy which will not consist with seriousness, doth not become a man, much less a Christian. Christ appeared to dislike the joy of his disciples, even in the success of their ministry, when they seemed to be transported with it. In heaven there is joy, but no vain mirth."

In the afflictions of his friends, he was literally afflicted. He incessantly displayed sympathy and kindness to his friends in life; and when death rendered intercourse impossible, his unaffected sorrow,

and his readiness to serve needy survivors, gave to his sincerity the fullest demonstration.

Mr. Henry was eminent for diligence, and for the improvement of time. It is said of the Waldenses and Albigenses, that they are always working, learning, or teaching—a testimony peculiarly applicable to the subject of this memoir.

In one year he preached two hundred and eleven times, besides his expositions and family devotions. In some years he probably preached even oftener than this. He frequently preached seven times in the course of a week.

He possessed, in fact, the very spirit of the illustrious confessors who have been just named, and of their rivals, the early Puritans and non-conformists, *his own* forefathers in the sacred office; emulating not only their inflexible courage and their untiring perseverance, but also their early rising and their incessant toil. "Value your souls," was a remark he sometimes made, "and you will value your time. Whatever you do, take heed of idleness. That is the devil's anvil, on which he hammers out many temptations."

In advising others, he would say, "Do not lose the morning." And he practised as well as taught. Like his divine Master, he often rose "a great while before day." He was usually in his study at five, and sometimes at four o'clock. Here he remained till seven or eight. After family worship and break-

fast, he returned till noon; and oftentimes, again, after dinner, till four in the afternoon. He then visited the sick, or his friends, and attended to other business. In the evening, after his family were dismissed, and before he yielded himself to sleep, he again retired to his study. Concerning sleep he remarked, that it "is God's gift to those he loves; nature requires it; grace gives thanks for it; but those who love it more than their business, when they should love it only *in order* to their business, expose themselves to a great deal of sin."

In his diary he often complains of precious hours *lost* in the company of those whom he loved; he often laments that friends are the thieves of time; and, on one occasion, when noticing even gratifying intercourse with some of his brethren and others whom he highly esteemed, he says, "I would not, for any thing, live such a life for a few days together. I am always best when alone. No place is like my own study: no company like good books, especially the book of God." "When I lose time at home," he said, "I wish I was abroad preaching; when time abroad is not filled up as it should be, I wish myself at home studying. God, by his grace, help me to *fill up* time—to be busy while working-time lasts."

Mr. Henry cultivated Christian love. He accustomed himself to contemplate true believers, notwithstanding a difference of views about lesser things, as having access through Christ, "by one

Spirit, unto the Father." "*There*," he would say, "is the centre of the saints' unity—'one in us,'" alluding to John 17 : 21 ; "not one in the pope, or a general council, but one in God and Christ."

Alluding to the prospect of an interview with a friend as yet personally unknown, he thus beautifully expressed the habitual temper of his mind : "This is not the world we are to be together in ; but there *is* such a world before us, where we 'shall be together for ever, and with the Lord.' To the general assembly of the church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, we are *already* come in faith and hope ; by virtue of which we meet daily at the same throne of grace, and have comfort in a spiritual communion with 'all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.' This is an earnest of that blissful state in which we shall be with all the saints, none but saints, and saints 'made perfect;' where Luther and Calvin are both of a mind. God keep us 'looking for that blessed hope.'"

He regarded all believers as "saints;" and although, in compliance with custom, or in accommodation to current prejudices, he often prefixed the epithet "saint" before the name of an evangelist or an apostle, yet he preferred its disuse.

For the reputation of others, especially of God's faithful servants, he uniformly observed a particular tenderness. Indeed, he had been trained to this

from his infancy. His excellent father was famous for a steady opposition to "evil-speaking;" and seems to have taken pains to infuse into all around him the same spirit. He (Philip Henry) would tell his children of a gentleman whose custom it was, when he came into the company of such of the ungodly as were likely to utter reproaches against the Puritans, to inform them beforehand, "Sirs, I desire you to take notice, I am one of those you call Puritans; and therefore, if you like my company, and mean I should stay with you, pray forbear talking evil of them, for I cannot away with it." And the good man noticed, with evident satisfaction, how much sin was thus prevented.

And the son did honor to his progenitor in this, as well as in many other respects. He was sparing of his words in reference to character, candid towards his absent brethren, and as deaf as an adder to whisperers and tattlers. Sometimes he would indignantly remark, "How many are there who go about as talebearers; in one place to pick up slanders, or to dig for them, and then scatter them in another. Look upon such," he would add, "as incendiaries. Avoid them as you would those who should attempt to set fire to your clothes."

Unless he felt imperatively called to other duties, Mr. Henry uniformly contented himself with deducing from the misconduct of others an incitement to prayer and circumspection. After noticing a circum-

stance in reference to one of his ministerial brethren which occasioned him grief and surprise, he merely says, "The Lord give us wisdom, and watchfulness, and resolution. It is dangerous to *begin* sinful familiarities."

Christian candor was a virtue which contributed, in no small degree, to adorn Mr. Henry's character. He records it as an occasion of comfort to himself, that he felt able truly to say, that he was far from lessening any man's excellences, either with regard to intellectual or moral qualities, on account of his differing from him. And he nobly advised others to delight in the holy generosity of speaking well of those who might differ from them. Yet he was not indifferent about error; nor did he ever hesitate, upon proper occasions, to make an open avowal of his sentiments; always avoiding bitterness, indeed, but speaking unequivocally, and without fear.

The esteem which he cherished for all pious conformists, was very cordial and very exemplary. He loved them as brethren in Christ Jesus. He would sometimes say, "I hate to see religion and the church monopolized; as if Christ took his measures from *our* little fancies and opinions. Those I call Christians, not who are of this or that party, but who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; those, whatever dividing name they are known by, who live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this world. The question, by and by, will not be, in what place

or what posture we worshipped God, but, did we worship in the Spirit." The attachment which he cherished for the principles of non-conformity, resulting, as it did, from the most careful examination and decided conviction, invested his candor with the most lovely charms. "Grace be with all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," was one of the influential mottos of his life and conduct.

And the moderation which was conspicuous in Mr. Henry's character, was not confined to strictly religious principles; it extended itself equally to those daily habits of life, of a moral kind, in reference to which many persons, in other respects wise and eminent, have lamentably failed. Speaking of intemperance, he observed, that it was by eating we all fell. He said, "Nothing is more contrary to the profession of a Christian, than the life of an epicure." And he advised all to "take heed of the *beginnings* of intemperance." "When in danger, try whether you have learned the first lesson in Christ's school—to deny yourselves." Adverting to the fact, that there are those who are "mighty to drink wine," he remarked, that "it is rather the commendation of a barrel than of a man, to be able to contain much liquor." In short, he preached and recommended, both on this subject and generally, a spirit of holy watchfulness—a duty, the neglect of which, he said, "renders a Christian like a city without gates and bars."

The same principle also discovered itself in him in reference to worldly possessions and acquirements. Even lawful comforts were used by him with indifference, as one whose affections were "set on things above." He observed, "We *see* present things; but we must not *look* at them. Herein, surely, consists the very life and power of religion."

With regard to money, useful and valuable as it unquestionably is in its proper place, he remarked, with a view to check the *love* of it, that it "has no currency in the other world. The great day," he said, "will burn up all those things upon which men now set their hearts."

It grieved him to see professed Christians living as though their happiness were bound up in the creature. When viewing the worldliness of the church, he said, "Many people think that there is no harm in spending upon themselves, if they can afford it; little considering how greatly the precious soul is hereby wronged." And he advised all such persons to "lay out no more in the repairs of their cottage than will be allowed in their accounts," alluding to the final judgment.

Whenever he perceived any "angry at those who stood in their light," or, in other words, envious and jealous, he thought it a sign that the things which "are seen and temporal" were most looked at. And "will you," he inquired, "who are hoping for treasure in heaven, pant after the dust of the earth?"

An incident occurred after Mr. Henry's removal to Hackney, which places the view which has been given of this part of his character in an interesting light; and the record having been written by himself at the time, prevents misconception, and renders a doubt of its truth impossible. It is taken from his diary and original manuscript, and is as follows.

"MARCH 8, 1713. Lord's day. In the evening I went to London. I preached Mr. Rosewell's evening lecture, Psalm 89 : 15: "The joyful sound." As I came home, I was robbed. The thieves took from me about ten or eleven shillings. My remarks upon it were, 1. What reason have I to be thankful to God, who have travelled so much, and yet was never robbed before. 2. What a deal of evil the love of money is the root of, that four men would venture their lives and souls for about half a crown apiece. 3. See the power of Satan in the children of disobedience. 4. See the vanity of worldly wealth; how soon we may be stripped of it. How loose, therefore, should we sit to it."

From his moderation in reference to the "life that now is," it would be wrong to infer that he was negligent of his temporal affairs, or that he encouraged others either in indolence or neglect. The rule by which he was regulated himself, and which he recommended to others, was this—not to be idle, or careless, or prodigal, but graciously indifferent; in allusion to Matt. 6 : 25–34.

In early life, he embraced it as a maxim, that the "*prudent* Christian will be a prosperous Christian;" and therefore he diligently applied himself to the cultivation of the habit of prudence, and endeavored habitually to guide his affairs with discretion. His caution, indeed, often subjected him to reproach; but he had the satisfaction by it, of being kept out of difficulties, and preserved from the necessity of making humiliating concessions. Every eye within the circle of his acquaintance looked to him for direction and counsel. His advice was given with familiarity and minuteness; and, in addition to that sound instruction to which his great sagacity and long experience contributed, he usually quoted some appropriate portion of Scripture to bear upon the subject.

When Christians were afflicted or perplexed, he was far from encouraging them in the indulgence of gloomy apprehensions, but studiously pointed out the evil of such a course, and allured their attention heavenward. In such circumstances he would say, "Let not *one* affliction drown the sense of a thousand mercies. Our great duty is, to trust in God, to commit our way to him; and when our fears take us off from that, so that we cannot find in our hearts to let him dispose of us, they are sinful. Prevailing fears are briars and thorns, which choke many a good duty."

He never failed to remind his friends, that God

has *promised* to direct the steps of those who in "all their ways acknowledge him;" and therefore he uniformly and pressingly commended attendance at the throne of grace, especially in seasons of distress. Sometimes he expressed the pleasure which those visits afforded him, in which his friends requested him to pray with them. And however agreeable the company which he met on such occasions might be, or however excellent the entertainment, if a separation took place *without* united prayer, he felt both uncomfortable and disappointed. Such an occurrence, on one occasion, is recorded by him very mournfully. Most of his particular friends loved prayer; for they had been trained to the enriching practice. If any drew near to an hour of sorrow; if any journey was in prospect; if any affair of consequence was to be managed; if any child was to be apprenticed, or otherwise to be disposed of, it was usual with them to commit all to God, not only in their closets and families, but also with their ministers. In this "good old way" Mr. Henry found, and encouraged them; nor did any circumstances of meanness or poverty prevent his personal concurrence. "How sweet a thing it is," he would say, "to pray, minding a particular errand."

Mr. Henry endeavored to enforce, both upon himself and others, such sentiments as were calculated to promote a charitable disposition. "We lose," said he, "what we save. Withholding that which

is meet tends to spiritual poverty—the worst of all husbandry. It is like grudging seed to the ground." As occasion served, he plainly pointed out the great evil of covetousness. Sometimes he urged upon all around him their exposure to that sin, and advised them to suspect themselves guilty of it. "We are born," said he, "with the world in our hearts." Perceiving that many "think themselves not covetous because they are *content* with what they have," he added, in allusion to the parable, "so was that fool."

In the exercise of benevolence, Mr. Henry remembered the example of Him who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Like the children of the Highest, therefore, he was "kind to the unthankful and to the evil." After lending seven guineas to obtain a discharge for the son of a poor friend who had enlisted, he observed that many reasons offered themselves why he should have *abandoned* him; "but," he adds—and it is a fine development of genuine Christianity—"the mercy of God to me, a provoking, backsliding sinner, answered them all. God doth not cut men off, though, by their iniquity, they have sold themselves."

Humility was a characteristic of Mr. Henry's mind. "I am come to the close of another year," he remarked at the end of 1691, "but my works have not been filled up; there are many empty

spaces in my time, and in my duties much amiss; little done, little gained for my soul, though much mercy received, yet my talents have not been traded with aright. It is the blood of Christ that must set all straight between me and my God. There I rest my precious soul."

On one occasion, when advising others on this subject, he thus expressed his own sentiments and the teachings of the word of God: "Run up all the streams to the fountain. Every crown must be cast before the throne, and every song sung to that humble tune—'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.' God plants the trees of righteousness, that he may be glorified."

"Doth it," he would inquire, "become us to be proud, when our Master was so humble?" "Read the lives of the eminent saints who are gone, and see how far you come short of *their* gifts, and graces, and performances, and usefulness; and you will rather blush than be proud."

After a season of communion with the Lord at his table, his earnest desires were thus recorded: "I begged and promised, with the cup of blessing—humility, humility. The Lord keep it in the imagination of the thought of my heart."

For the movements of pride he made no allowances. He viewed haughtiness as transgression against both the law and the Gospel. "The design

of each of those," he said, "is to humble us: the former, by convincing us of sin; the latter, by making us entirely beholden to Jesus Christ for life and happiness." And he endeavored personally to cultivate in himself what he constantly recommended to others. This is seen by the manner in which he marked and bewailed faults and infirmities in himself which others could not perceive; and this, not publicly, in ostentation, but in the retirement of the closet, for purposes the most devout and improving. The reader is furnished with a few instances.

After forming a catalogue of his library, he writes, "I am not so much ashamed that I have so few books, and so little choice, as that I have not profited more by those I have."

"I have reason to lament my slothfulness, my distractions in prayer, and the coldness of my zeal for God."

"O what reason have I to mourn over my dulness and deadness, and that I am not more affected myself with those things of God with which I desire to affect others."

"I studied for to-morrow in much weakness. I am compassed about with infirmity."

"A trifling world and a trifling heart, are my great grievances."

Sentiments like these not only evince the depth, and reality, and genuineness of his humility, but

they read to others important lessons of instruction. If *he* deplored so many evils, and those from which, in the sight of his fellow-Christians, he appeared most free, what must be the condition of multitudes who arrogate the very excellences themselves, with no better pretensions than are furnished by their own deluded fancy; having, at the utmost, to boast of the appearance only?

Mr. Henry's general deportment exhibited the same lowly, yet elevating principles. He walked humbly before God and man; and the more so, in proportion to the smiles and caresses which he received. It was a maxim with him, which he recommended to the attention of others, "When the wind of applause blows fresh and strong, then steer with a steady hand."

Writing to a "dear and honored friend," who had addressed a letter of encouragement to him respecting his exposition of the Scriptures, he says, "The opinion of one of your judgment, learning, and piety, as it is a temptation to pride, (against which I desire your prayers, that I may have grace always to stand upon my guard,) so it is improvable, also, as a spur to industry; and as such I desire to make use of it. I hope you will assist me in giving thanks to God for his assistance hitherto. Sure I have nothing to boast of. What have I that I have not received? I am unworthy to be thus employed. Continue your prayers for me, that I may be carried on in it in a

humble dependence upon divine grace. Every page, sir, is a child of prayer, and still must be so, or it will miscarry."

After a journey, in which mercy had surrounded him, he writes, "I have not been exercised with the reproaches of enemies, but with a more difficult temptation from my friends—undeserved respects. The Lord carry me safe through evil report and good report." And another time, in similar circumstances of respectful attention, he adds, "I am ashamed to think how unworthy I am of it."

It is worthy of remark, that Mr. Henry's humbleness of mind was intimately associated with an abiding perception of his necessity of divine influence, both to help and prosper him. "I have as much need," he wrote, "of the grace of God to furnish me with a heart to my work, as with a head for it; to continue my delight in it, as much as to give me ability for it."

Again he wrote, "From God is my fruit found; nor can I bring forth the fruit, unless I abide in Christ. Therefore, whatever opportunities I may have of doing or getting good, I depend upon his grace to enable me to improve them, and to do the work of the year in the year. I depend upon that grace to enable me to go on with my present services, both in my study and in my ministerial work; and if I should be called out to any duties or sufferings unforeseen, I depend upon the grace of God

to strengthen me for them, and, in every thing, to guide my way."

Contemplating persons whom he could not but regard as "dead in trespasses and sins," and for whose conversion he longed, he said, "I know the great difficulty lies in *conviction;* and Eloi, my God, is he who must do it. It is 'the Spirit of truth' who must convince."

Mr. Henry inculcated and cultivated a spirit of patient submission under trials. He remarked, that "affliction is the discipline of God's school, whereby his children are trained up in the way in which they should go. And it is *necessary:* as needful as weeding is to a garden, as pruning to the vine, as physic to the body." "Do not expect," he would say, "to find it all carpet-way to heaven." He observed, nevertheless, that "though the weather may be foul, and the ways dirty, home is not far off; and all is quiet and well there."

Enumerating the *advantages* of affliction, he mentioned penitence, patience, thankfulness, a thoughtful frame of mind, watchfulness against sin, weaning from the world, activity in faith, affection in prayer, a spirit of compliance with God's word, compassion to our brethren, love to Jesus Christ, and longing for heaven. "How can we help loving Christ," said he, "when we find his *grace* working in us; his *comforts* delighting our souls; his *blood* a healing balm, a reviving cordial! And as to heaven, we

have crosses in our way that we may *wish* for it. Stormy weather makes the harbor desirable."

He compared murmuring to squeezing wormwood into the bitter cup.

In his estimate of afflictions he took a wide range; and noticed sometimes the condition of the Psalmist, as fully descriptive of the circumstances of the people of God in general. They are "plagued and chastened"—not lightly touched, but plagued—with strokes sharp and heavy. And he observed, that the word chasten had reference to offences, to faults committed, which consideration should silence all complaints.

He recommended afflicted persons to search earnestly after the procuring cause, for "the particular sin, the Achan that troubles the camp, the Jonah that raises the storm. See," he said, "if the affliction have not the inscription of the crime over it; and if you cannot find out the *particular* sin, do as Herod did by the infants—destroy all. This will answer the end."

To guard against improper inferences from an afflicted condition, particularly in cases where indigence was associated with affliction, he would observe, citing Eccles. 9:1, 2, that "divine love is not to be inferred from adversity any more than from prosperity. A man may live a miserable life in this world, and yet live a much more miserable one in the other. Those who have nothing *else* to

show for their hope of heaven but their afflictions, deceive themselves. God needs not make any man happy in the other world, to make him amends for wrong done to him in this." Nevertheless, he remarked, "Afflictions are good tokens; signs that God has not left us; that his Spirit has not done striving with us; and, when sanctified, they are tokens of God's love."

Mr. Henry was no stranger himself to the truth of an observation once made by his revered father, when recovering from sickness: namely, this, "Six things are a salve for every sore—Christ, a good conscience, the promises, patience, prayer, and heaven in foretaste."

At a time when Mr. Henry was seized with violent pain, which "presently grew extreme, and continued all the afternoon without the least intermission or remission," he writes—and it excellently shows the habitual composure of his spirit under sorrow—"I bless God I had much inward comfort, calling upon him, and applying the promises; and he supported me. My friends visited me, and sympathized with me, for which I bless God. But the *great* support is, that Christ bore our sicknesses; so that there is no sting in them. O that tribulation might work patience."

In sufferings of another kind, also, he manifested the same happy state of mind. When maligned and reproached, he aspired, with intense solicitude,

after meekness and patience; and instead of rendering evil for evil, requited it with good; ever seeking to improve such occurrences for his own advancement in Christian virtue. "How pleasant it is," he would say, "to have the bird in the bosom sing sweet."

Mr. Henry's piety towards God, and his devotional habits, formed the basis of his exalted character, and of his eminent attainments. He prescribed rules alike for his own guidance and for the instruction of others, which are well worthy of study and attention. They are as follows:

"1. We should mind that first and most, which is most needful. It is not needful that we be rich and great in the world, but it is needful that we should have the favor of God, an interest in Christ, and a new nature.

"2. We should serve and please him by whom we live, and without whom we cannot subsist. Of two evils, the least is to be chosen; we should, therefore, choose affliction rather than iniquity.

"3. Great pains are well bestowed where great gains are expected. And do we not look for a kingdom which cannot be moved? When we grow dull, and slothful, and indifferent, think—Do I work now as one that is working for *heaven?* Is this running, striving, wrestling?

"4. It is good to be sure in matters of consequence; great things should not be left at uncer-

tainties. And when our precious souls are at stake, should we not make sure work? build upon a rock?

"5. We should provide most carefully for that state which is to be of the longest continuance. We know and believe we must be *somewhere* for ever; and reason teaches us to lay up in store for the 'time to come.' We all profess to believe the 'life everlasting,' but do we indeed believe it? There is more of practical atheism, deism, infidelity, and sadduceeism, among us than we are aware of.

"6. We should be concerned to do that at the present time, which must be done sometime, or we are undone to all eternity."

To the practice of prayer Mr. Henry unceasingly addicted himself; and he thanked God for the frequent occasions he had for the exercise of this "sweet and precious duty." "I *love* prayer," said he. "It is that which buckles on all the Christian's armor." On this topic he said, "O that in it I might be inward with God. What incomes of grace, and peace, and glory, yea, and outward good things, as far as they are indeed good for us, have we by our access to God in Christ. Such have a companion ready in all their solitudes; a counsellor in all their doubts; a comforter in all their sorrows; a supply in all their wants; a support under all their burdens; a shelter in all their dangers; strength for all their performances; and salvation insured by a sweet and undeceiving earnest. What

is heaven but an everlasting access to God? And present access to him is a pledge of it."

In Mr. Henry's case, no journey was undertaken, nor any subject or course of sermons entered upon; no book committed to the press, nor any trouble apprehended, or felt, without a particular application to the mercy-seat for direction, assistance, and success. It was his joy that the throne of grace is always open. "I would not," said he—and he was in distressing circumstances when the remark was made—"I would not bring the cares of my family into the mount of communion with God, to distract me there; yet I have leave to bring them to present them before the Lord, and to leave them with him; and with him I have left them." In a letter to one of his friends, he said, "If there be any comfort in this troublesome world, it is in communion with God by the word and prayer. There we may have sweet foretastes of the pleasures of the everlasting rest."

When speaking of closet-prayer, he advised that care be taken against indulging in any vain-glorious humor. "Shut the door," said he, "lest the wind of hypocrisy blow in at it." And he gave it as his settled and deliberate judgment, that if secret prayer be either neglected or negligently performed, the power of godliness will wither and decline.

Mr. Henry abounded in holy meditation. And his estimate of the influence of that duty upon the

Christian life is evident from the earnestness with which he pressed Christians to its performance. "Take a walk," was his counsel, "*every* day, by faith and meditation, to mount Calvary. There is nothing like it."

Adopting, as an axiom, the saying of his excellent father, that "all who would go to heaven when they die, must *begin* their heaven while they live," he recommended frequent contemplation upon that inconceivable state. "Dwell upon it," he would say, "in your thoughts; set time apart to do so. Look at the things which are not seen. All we do we should do with a design for heaven: pray, and hear, and talk, and walk, and live, and all for eternal life. Christians are heirs of salvation. And how doth a young heir please himself with the thoughts of his inheritance." Sometimes he proposed such inquiries as these: "When are you accustomed to think upon the heavenly happiness? What room has it in your thoughts? What walks do you take into the holy city? O get a scripture-map of the New Jerusalem, and study it well."

A distinguishing feature of Mr. Henry's character, and one which essentially promoted its spiritual maturity, was the habit which he indulged of making a wise observation of the conduct of Providence. It was his opinion that "much of the life of religion" lies in holy adorings of God, "which," said he, "must be excited, and cherished, and furnished

with matter, by our remarks upon his providence—for strengthening our faith—for our direction in prayer—for our instruction in the ordering of our conversations."

He sometimes noticed the "abundant sweetness" it imparts to "any mercy, to see it growing upon the root of a promise." And he observed, that "the good things of the saints are not dispensed out of the basket of common providence, but out of the ark of the covenant." By this habit of mind, he was led, in all circumstances, to cherish hope; a duty much pressed in Scripture. "It is reckoned," said he, "among a growing Christian's comforts, Rom. 5 : 1, 4, and it hath no less a place among a growing Christian's graces."

And hence his advice to all believers was, "Hope in God. Trust him as to all your outward concerns. Live a life of dependence upon him; upon his wisdom, power, goodness, and promise. Take but the exhortations of one psalm: it is the 37th. Be satisfied that really all is well, and shortly it will appear well which he doeth. Be careful, principally, about *duty*." "Shall I," he inquires, "trust God with my soul, and shall I not trust him with every thing else? Shall I trust him for a heaven hereafter, and shall I not trust him for provision in the way to it?"

Mr. Henry honored the holy Sabbath. He styled it not only "a day of rest, but a day of work; the work which they do who enter into the everlasting

rest." And his advice as to the performance of its social and public duties was in full accordance. "Keep close," he said, "to the God of grace. Ordinances are the golden pipes by which the oil of grace is conveyed. That holy oil keeps the lamp of hope burning; therefore David desires to *dwell* in the house of the Lord all the days of his life. Let sanctuary privileges make you long to be within the veil."

Commemorating the twentieth anniversary of his second marriage, he noticed that he and Mrs. Henry had enjoyed together a thousand Sabbaths; and he testified that they were the most comfortable of their days.

He uniformly maintained that the *design* of the Sabbath is "holiness; a distinction between that which is common and that which is sacred; that it is a divine institution, and not a human invention; that it is God's time, and not our own; that the whole day is holy to the Lord, and not church-time only; that God is jealous concerning his Sabbaths; and that care to sanctify them is a part of the character of a good Christian."

"Prepare for the Sabbath before it comes. *Remember* it. We read in the Gospel of the preparation—that is, the day before the Sabbath.

"See that nothing be done on the Lord's day which might as well have been done the day before. God is gracious in his allowances; let us not abuse

our liberty. You cannot expect things should fall as it were to be desired they should, unless you contrive them. Review the six days' work as God did. *You* will find all very bad. Renew repentance. 'I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord.'

"Begin the day with good thoughts; wake with God; bid the Sabbath welcome; go forth to meet it; think of Christ's resurrection; think of his waking *early* in the morning.

"Set God before you in all your Sabbath work. Do it as unto the Lord. See his eye upon you, and let your eye be upon him. It is the Sabbath of the Lord your God; from him you are to hear; to him you are to speak; it is he with whom you have to do every day, especially this day.

"Fill up Sabbath time with duty. Be good husbands of it. Redeem it—lose no part of it—it is all precious. Instruct your families in the things of God. You would not starve their bodies, do not starve their souls. Pray with them. Let them not be doing your work when they should be doing God's, further than necessity requires. By mild and gentle reproofs restrain them as much as possible from that which is evil. Let there be a manifest difference between that day and other days in your houses. Go from one duty to another as a bee from flower to flower. Remember the nature of the work, the necessity and excellency of it. Sabbaths come

but seldom; therefore be busy. Let all that is within you be at work, like all hands on a harvest-day; attend to secret, family, and public ordinances. Be more mild than on other days. Show that you have laid by the world. Keep it holy by employing it in holy work, or else you keep the Sabbath no better than the brutes for they *rest*. Holy work is to be done every day, but on this day it must be the work of the day.

"Do common actions on that day after a godly sort. Feed the body that it may be fit to serve the soul. Take care it be not *un*fitted. Eat and drink as those who must pray again. Works of necessity must be done with a Sabbath frame of heart. Pray against that which may take you off from your Sabbath work. Remember Christ allows us to do *good* on the Sabbath-day.

"Be much in praise. Rejoice in the resurrection of Christ. Sing psalms.

"Carry the Sabbath with you into the week. Let it relish with all your converse. You have many thoughts of the world on Sabbath-days, have as many thoughts of God on week-days.

"Every Sabbath-day think much of heaven. Have *it* in your mind—have *it* in your eye. That is the general assembly. Get ready for it."

CHAPTER XIII.

His commencement of the Exposition—List of its continuators—Remarks made in his diary during the progress of commenting—Opinions of worthy divines concerning the Commentary—Mr. Henry's superlative attachment to the Bible.

Mr. Henry was a voluminous writer. A large quarto volume, containing his miscellaneous works, forms a noble monument of his piety and industry. But the great work to which his studies and pursuits had, for many years, been chiefly directed, and that upon which his fame chiefly rests, is "An Exposition of the Old and New Testament: wherein each chapter is summed up in its contents; the sacred text inserted at large in distinct paragraphs; each paragraph reduced to its proper heads; the sense given, and largely illustrated; with practical remarks and observations." This work was begun in the latter part of the year 1704. The following is his own brief account of the commencement of this work, from Mr. Henry's diary.

"November 12, 1704. This night, after many thoughts of heart, and many prayers concerning it, I began my Notes on the Old Testament. It is not likely I should live to finish it, or if I should, that it should be of public service, for I am not *par ne-*

gotio, [equal to the undertaking;] yet in the strength of God, and I hope with a single eye to his glory, I set about it, that I may endeavor something, and spend my time to some good purpose; and let the Lord make what use he pleaseth of me. I go about it with fear and trembling, lest I exercise myself in things too high for me, etc. The Lord help me to set about it with great humility."

The good man's remark, that he might not live to finish the great work which he thus piously commenced, proved, ultimately, to be but too prophetic. Dr. Watts, in his copy of the Exposition, upon a blank leaf at the beginning of the last volume, wrote the following statement:

"The Reverend Mr. Matthew Henry, before his death, had made some small preparations for this last volume. The epistle to the Romans, indeed, was explained so largely by his own hand, that it needed only the labor of epitomizing. Some parts of the other epistles were done, but very imperfectly, by himself; and a few other hints had been taken in shorthand from his public and private expositions on some of the epistles.

"By these assistances, the ministers whose names are here written, have endeavored to complete this work in the style and method of the author: viz.

Romans, ... Mr. [afterwards Dr.] John Evans.
1 Corinthians, . . Mr. Simon Browne.

2 Corinthians,	Mr. Daniel Mayo.
Galatians,	Mr. Joshua Bayes.
Ephesians,	Mr. Samuel Rosewell.
Philippians, Colossians,	Mr. [afterwards Dr.] William Harris.
1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians,	Mr. Daniel Mayo.
1 Timothy, 2 Timothy,	Mr. Benjamin Andrews Atkinson.
Titus, Philemon,	Mr. Jeremiah Smith.
Hebrews,	Mr. William Tong.
James,	Mr. William Wright.
1 Peter,	Mr. Zech. Merrill.
2 Peter,	Mr. Joseph Hill.
1, 2, and 3 John,	Mr. John Reynolds, of Shrewsbury.
Jude,	Mr. John Billingsley.
Revelations,	Mr. William Tong."

This list is preserved here, as well to show to posterity to whom they are indebted for the portions of Henry's Bible which he himself did not live to finish, as to give the reader a clearer idea than he would perhaps be disposed otherwise to entertain of the vast labor which Mr. Henry himself performed, in producing in the course of ten years the five volumes which he lived to complete, besides discharging, at the same time, the ordinary duties of a Christian pastor.

A few extracts from his diary, respecting the progress of the work, can scarcely fail to interest every reader of these pages.

"JULY 19, 1705. Through the good hand of my God upon me, I have finished Genesis. The Lord still go on with me.

"SEPTEMBER 14. Studied in Exodus 21. I am now come to the less pleasant part of the Mosaic writings; but thanks be to God, *all* Scripture is profitable.

"NOVEMBER 30. Leviticus 16. O that I may find Christ in the Old Testament, and may be led into the mystery of godliness. God was manifested by degrees.

"DECEMBER 31. I have pleasure in my study; for which I praise my God. Having obtained help from him, I go on with much comfort to myself in my Notes on the Pentateuch. Whether ever they will be of use to any other, and be accepted, He only knows who knows the hearts of all the children of men.

"AUGUST 18, 1706. I almost finished Deuteronomy 34. It is about a year and nine months since I began with Genesis. Blessed be God who has helped me. I have written it with a great deal of pleasure, but my thoughts of publishing have been with fear and trembling.

"AUGUST 20. I finished the review of Deuteronomy, and thanked God for his assistance; ashamed of my own defects and follies. The Lord grant they may not be a prejudice to my design, which is, to contribute something as a servant to that great

divine intention—to magnify the law, and make it honorable.

"September 9. Read eighteen or twenty sheets on Genesis, to mark the errata. I have reason to be ashamed of my own errata.

"September 23. Studied in the preface.

"September 24. Went on with the preface, in which I desired that every word should be a true copy of my heart.

"September 27. Studied, preparing to begin Joshua in the strength of God.

"November 12. This evening I received the last of the sheets on the Pentateuch, and in them the epistle of Mr. Shower and Mr. Tong, which I knew not of, nor ever mentioned, or thought of, till I heard from Mr. Parkhurst [the printer] that they had prefixed it.

"November 21. This evening I received a parcel of the Exposition of the Pentateuch. I desire to bless God that has given me to see it finished. I had comfort from that promise, Thou shalt find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.

"December 31. I, who am unworthy to be employed for God at all, have been enabled, by his free grace, to finish and publish this year the Exposition of the Pentateuch, with some hope of its being serviceable to the church of God. The glory of which I desire to give entirely to God. I have nothing in it to boast of.

"August 21, 1707. Finished 2 Samuel. Blessed be God, who has carried me on thus far, and makes my work my delight.

"September 10. Finished the reading over of my Exposition to the end of 2 Samuel. I have cause to be ashamed of my own defects, and thankful for the grace of God: the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to him; for of thine own, Lord, have we given thee.

"September 11. I sent up, this day, my Exposition to the end of 2 Samuel, in sixty-eight sheets; having first offered it to God and to his service, and prayed over it, and every leaf in it, as an answer to prayer.

"November 17. 2 Kings 11, to v. 16. I find that just here Peter Martyn was in his learned Expositions when he fell sick and died. Lord, my times are in thy hand.

"June 1, 1708. After earnest prayers to God for his presence, I this morning began the third volume of Expositions: did the argument of the book of Job.

"January 25, 1709. Psalms 26 and 27. A letter from one Mr. Samuel Bere, unknown, dated from Exeter, owning good got by my Exposition, and encouraging me to proceed, for which I praise my God. It is an encouragement to me to continue here," alluding to his invitations to London; "for what reason have I to think that I should be more

useful than I am, when God has been pleased to make me so much more useful than I am worthy to be?

"December 27. Finished the review of Proverbs. The Lord write in my heart all these lessons of wisdom.

"December 31, 1710. And now, through the good hand of my God upon me, I am brought to the end of another year. It has been a year of much mercy: the coming out of the third volume, and the Method for Prayer, for which I desire to bless God, and give him all the glory of both; for what am I? I have reason to be ashamed of myself that I have not done my work better.

"January 1, 1711. What work I have to do for thee, O God, this year, I depend upon thy grace thoroughly to furnish me for it, and to work all my works in me, particularly to assist me in the great work of my Expositions, that I may write nothing that is frivolous, or foreign, or foolish, or flat, that may give just offence, or lead any into mistakes; but that all may be clear, and pertinent, and affecting; that I may find out genuine expositions, useful observations, profitable matter, and acceptable words, if it shall please God to spare me to go on with it.

"January 6. Finished Isaiah, through God's goodness. O that I might retain the tincture of it.

"September 29. Ezekiel 21. The excellent Calvin died at the end of his expounding Ezekiel 20.

"May 3, 1712. Malachi 4. Through the good hand of God, I have this day finished the Exposition of the Old Testament. Blessed be God.

"December 12, 1713. Began Acts, having first made an errand to the throne of grace for assistance.

"April 17, 1714. Finished Acts, and with it the fifth volume. Blessed be God that has helped me, and spared me. All praise be to God."

Surely, no one now in possession of Mr. Henry's valuable commentary can fail to have his estimation of it increased from the knowledge of the fact which the preceding extracts from his diary demonstrate; namely, that it was a work preceded, accompanied, followed, and pervaded with prayer. And is it not reasonable to hope, that many now destitute of this great work, will speedily obtain it, and avail themselves of its wise and holy instructions?

It would be easy to adduce numerous approving testimonies to the "Exposition," were not the necessity to do so superseded by the high estimate in which it is so universally held.

Mr. Tong remarked, that "As long as the Bible continues in England, Mr. Henry's admirable 'Expositions' will be prized by all serious Christians. In them his clear head, his warm heart, his life, his soul appears. While seriously perusing those excellent books, besides many others which he published, you will seem to yourselves to have Mr. Henry still with you."

Another writer, Mr. Burnham, says, "Mr. Henry's admirable commentary on the Scriptures, which hath been blessed to the instruction and edification of hundreds of ministers, and thousands of Christians, for more than a century, still maintains its reputation, above most, if not all other commentaries."

"I could wish," says Dr. Watts, "young ministers in the country might be allowed by their people to read a part of Mr. Henry's Exposition of the Bible, or repeat a sermon from some good author, one part of the Lord's day."

Dr. Doddridge observed, that "Mr. Henry is, perhaps, the only commentator, so large, that deserves to be entirely and attentively read through. The remarkable passages should be marked. There is much to be learned in a speculative, and still more in a practical way."

The good, but eccentric Mr. Ryland of Northampton, was of opinion, that "it is impossible for a person of piety and taste to read the Exposition of Mr. Henry, without wishing to be shut out from all the world to read it through without one moment's interruption."

The venerable and Rev. W. Romaine, in a prefatory recommendation to a folio edition, published in 1761, asserted that "there is no comment upon the Bible, either ancient or modern, in all respects equal to Mr. Henry's."

"Our young preachers," said the late revered

Dr. Edward Williams, "would do well to read with devotion and care those parts of Mr. Matthew Henry's practical and incomparable Exposition which relate to the subject they would preach upon."

Other competent judges have observed, with equal enthusiasm and accuracy, that "the learned leisure of the universities, or the sanctioned names of dignitaries, may have produced works which rank higher in the esteem of scholars; but Matthew Henry stands without a rival as an expositor of Scripture, for the edification of the church of God."

Nor is it feeble praise that the apostolic Whitefield, whose labors and virtues inspired even the pen of Cowper, was trained, as a Christian and a preacher, by Mr. Henry's commentary; that he literally studied it on his knees; read it through four times; and to the close of life spoke of its author with profound veneration; ever calling him the great Mr. Henry.

The lustre of Mr. Henry's qualifications as a minister and author was preëminently derived from his superlative attachment to the Bible. We will close these pages with a few of his own remarks in which this attachment is conspicuous.

"Let us," he said, "acquaint ourselves with the sweetness that is in the word of God; and let it be sweet to *us*. Get a new nature, spiritual senses exercised. Let the objects of faith be real. O *taste* that the Lord is gracious. Learn to draw sweetness

from a promise. Let us value the written word as the ark of the testament. Many reckon their Bibles only according to the price they cost them; as if the ark was worth no more than the gold with which it was overlaid. Let us lay up our Bibles as our *treasure;* as the Israelites did the ark in the Holy of holies. Let us lay them up in our hearts. Wherever we go, let us take the word of God with us. The Israelites, in their march through the wilderness, acted thus with the ark. Let it dwell in us 'richly.' Follow it. 'When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then shall ye remove from your place, and go after it.' Call the Bible your glory, and dread its removal. Phinehas' wife, when the ark was taken, named her child Ichabod—the glory is departed. Part with all rather than your Bibles. Suffer not the spiritual Philistines to rob you. Upon all occasions consult those lively oracles; and, as Moses received from over the ark *his* orders and instructions, so take *your* measures by the written word. Be governed by it. Covet, as David did the ark, to have it near you."

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